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**THE BIG TIME MINSTREL BOOK**

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# *The Big Time* **MINSTREL** **BOOK**



*The*  
**Willis N. Bugbee Co.**  
*Syracuse, N.Y.*





BUGBEE'S POPULAR BOOKS

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# The Big Time Minstrel Book

BY  
ARTHUR LEROY KASER

AUTHOR OF

*"Dixie Land Minstrels,"*

*"Love and Ashes,"*

*and numerous other books and plays*



THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE COMPANY  
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BIG TIME MINSTREL BOOK

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# CONTENTS

CO. SCHOOLS  
C136964 PAGE

The Minstrel Show's Popularity ( <i>A Foreword</i> ).....	3
Sunny South Minstrels ( <i>A Minstrel First Part</i> ).....	9
Minstrel Bits ( <i>Between Interlocutor and Endmen</i> )..	31
Comebacks ( <i>Between the Endmen</i> ).....	40
Insects, Invites, In Trouble ( <i>A Monologue</i> ).....	47
Hello, Folks ( <i>A Monologue</i> ).....	50
Take It or Leave It ( <i>A Monologue</i> ).....	53
Oh, Feet, Don't Leave Me! ( <i>An Olio</i> ).....	55
Sign On The Dotted Line ( <i>An Olio</i> ).....	63
Trouble, Almost ( <i>An Olio</i> ).....	69
On Your Way, Muskrat! ( <i>An Olio</i> ).....	74
Rickety-Rackety Rhymes	
And the Battle was On .....	78
Blind Love .....	78
Something Wrong .....	78
Out of the Past .....	78
Sow So .....	79
What's the Idea? .....	79
Vanishing America .....	80
A Brave on Broadway .....	81
That Antique Craze .....	83
Mummies, Rummies and Dummies ( <i>An Afterpiece</i> )..	84
At the Dock ( <i>A Musical Afterpiece</i> ).....	94



# The Big Time Minstrel Book

## THE MINSTREL SHOW'S POPULARITY

This appears to be the age of revivification. Old songs are coming back; antique furniture is replacing that of modern design, and one cannot help but see the tendency to popularize the old time minstrels. The broadcasting studio has turned to this never-failing form of entertainment to please its listening clientele; and above all we find its popularity more pronounced among the various clubs, lodges and societies in all parts of the country.

Why has the minstrel show become so popular with these thousands of societies? There are a number of reasons, all of which are obvious to anyone giving them a moment's thought. The minstrel show is a great money maker; it is easily produced. Rarely is it necessary to call in a professional director to look after the rehearsals. It can be presented on nearly any kind of a stage or platform. No dramatic talent is necessary. And with a reasonable number of rehearsals this type of entertainment can be made to appear more professional in tone than any other kind of stage presentation.

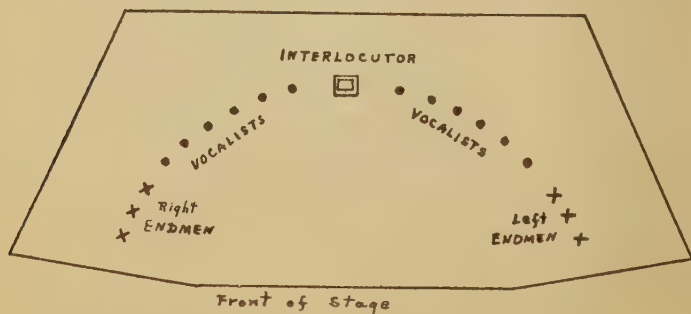
However, it should not be taken from the foregoing lines that a successful minstrel can be given if things are gone at in a haphazard way. There must be a conscientious effort on the part of every member taking part in the entertainment to put forward the best that is in him. The show as a whole should be built up in a systematic manner. Nothing should be left undone that will tend to make the show better and more complete. Give the audience their money's worth and they will call for more.

For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the routine of a complete minstrel show, the following rough draft is given. The first thing on the program is the First Part, followed by one or more Olios, and the show closing on what is called the Afterpiece.



The First Part is the most important part of the show and takes up more time than the Olio or Afterpiece. The First Part requires the services of all the members of the show, and is made up of solos, duets, quartette numbers, dance numbers if good dancers are available, and crossfire jokes, puns and gags between the Interlocutor and the Endmen. The Interlocutor is master of ceremonies and not only announces to the audience that which is to follow on the program but is the butt of the Endmen's jokes. He is sometimes called the "feeder" due to the fact that he usually opens the conversation with the Endmen giving the latter an opportunity to put their jokes across. The Interlocutor is usually played whiteface, but can be played blackface if desired. Very seldom are the Endmen other than blackface. The other members, who go to make up the vocal contingent, may be either black or whiteface. If blackface, these members are blacked and attired in a rather dignified manner which contrasts very noticeably with the ludicrous make-up of the Endmen.

The arrangement of the stage for the First Part is very simply accomplished. Sufficient chairs are placed on the stage to accommodate all the members of the company. These chairs are arranged in a semi-circle (called the Circle), the ends of this semi-circle being nearest the footlights. The



ARRANGEMENT OF CHAIRS FOR FIRST PART

arrangement diagram is self-explanatory. The backs and legs of the chairs are covered with white cloth, or cloth of some

bright color. The chair of the Interlocutor, however, should be covered with a different color from the others to make it stand out and present a more exalted position. The chairs of the Endmen, if desired, may be decorated in some outlandish manner.

The Olio is similar to a vaudeville sketch, and one or more are given on the front of the stage while the stage carpenters are working back of the drop preparing the stage for the Afterpiece. Very few characters take part in the Olios, preferably the Endmen. This gives the other members an opportunity to change their costumes, etc., for their parts in the Afterpiece. If the Interlocutor takes a part in the Afterpiece he usually assumes a role that is more dignified than the others. In the eyes of the audience he is still the master of ceremonies.

The Afterpiece is usually a nonsensical sketch requiring most or all of the members that took part in the First Part. It should be something that can be rendered in a lively and hilarious manner. This, however, does not imply that it necessarily has to be boisterous, or violent. Never should it be uncouth nor objectionable to the most fastidious. A bit ago it was stated that the First Part was the most important part of the show. It was not meant to imply that the Afterpiece should be neglected. It should be studied and rehearsed with as much enthusiasm and diligence as the First Part, for it is the duty of the Afterpiece to send 'em away with a laugh.

### The Interlocutor

There was a time when it was thought necessary to have the Interlocutor appear very pompous. These rather absurd dignitaries have given up their places to the more friendly type of middlemen who, though still holding themselves a bit aloof, meet the endmen on a more equal plane. It is well to select a man to fill this important position who is quite well known about town, and one that is well liked.

### A Few Hints to the Endmen

1. Memorize the jokes as they are written in the book. Any attempt to change the lines of the puns and gags may result in an awkward failure to get them across.

2. Too much dialect is worse than none at all. A joke is no good if the audience cannot understand it. Enunciate clearly, and do not talk too fast. Do not continue to talk while the audience is laughing. Wait until the house is reasonably quiet before proceeding.

3. Do not try to "hog" the stage. Do nothing to attract the attention of the audience to you when some one else is performing. This practice is not only very rude, but gives the audience the impression that you, being a novice, are nervous and fidgety and trying to act smart all at the same time. Don't do it.

4. When an encore is demanded by the audience following a song or dance do not appear too willing to comply, and then wait for a signal from the Interlocutor before proceeding.

5. Do not have something up your sleeve that you are going to spring on the bunch on the night of the show. Do the same on the night of the show that you have been doing at the rehearsals. Otherwise the smooth action that the director has been working for so long will be rudely jumbled, and you will be nobody's friend for awhile.

6. One defective working part in a watch will make it a poor timekeeper. One defective member in a minstrel company will have a tendency to "jim up the works."

7. Do the best you can, and a little better is possible.

### Music

Care should be taken in selecting suitable songs for the minstrel show. Any old song will not do. It is not a difficult matter nowadays to purchase songs written especially for minstrel presentation. Opening and closing choruses may be purchased complete ready for the orchestra and singers.

## SUNNY SOUTH MINSTRELS

## A Minstrel First Part

INTERLOCUTOR (*as soon as Opening Chorus is finished*). Gentlemen, be seated. (*All members of the circle sit in unison, laying their tambourines quietly on the floor beside the chairs. The tambourines are not touched again until the finale.*) How do you feel this fine evening, Mr. Bones?

BONES. Like a man with a five-dollar dinner check in one hand and only two dollars in the other hand.

INTERLOCUTOR. And how is that?

BONES. Wild-eyed and desperate.

INTERLOCUTOR. And, Mr. Tambo; how are you?

TAMBO. I'm worried. Awhile ago a big dog bit me.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did you put an antiseptic on it immediately?

TAMBO. No, it run away.

INTERLOCUTOR (*stands and announces to audience*). Our smoke-hued songbird, Mr. Bones, will eject his musical effervescence for your approval.

(*Comedy song by BONES.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Mr. Tambo, what is this I hear about you being in the real estate game?

TAMBO. Yep, I'm in it.

INTERLOCUTOR. Have you sold anything yet?

TAMBO. Lots.

INTERLOCUTOR. I presume you build to suit.

TAMBO. No, sah. We got a new system. We build to fit.

INTERLOCUTOR. How do you mean? You build to fit?

TAMBO. We measure the buvers and build the house to fit 'em.

INTERLOCUTOR. What I mean is, you build the house the way the buyer wants it, do you not?

TAMBO. Oh, sure. Yesterday a big fat man asked us to build a house for him. He wanted a sun parlor behind.

INTERLOCUTOR. I see. And a bay window in front.

TAMBO. He already had one there. And he wanted a stairway that run both ways.

INTERLOCUTOR. Run both ways? How do you mean?

TAMBO. When you're down they run up, and when you're up they run down. And he wanted two kinds of water.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, of course. Hot and cold.

TAMBO. No, sah. Dirty and clean.

INTERLOCUTOR. Where is this land you are developing?

TAMBO. Just two minutes from the center of town.

INTERLOCUTOR. Only two minutes from the center of (*local town*)?

TAMBO. Uh-huh. By telephone. You only have to ride two miles.

INTERLOCUTOR. And there you are?

TAMBO. Yep, there you is. Then you swim four miles.

INTERLOCUTOR. Swim? It must be a low-lying section.

TAMBO. I'll say it is. You can't beat 'em out there when it comes to low lying.

INTERLOCUTOR. I'm prejudiced against building on low land on account of mosquitoes. I'll wager they're thick out there.

TAMBO. Not yet. But if many folks move out there they'll fatten up.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now tell me honestly, Tambo. Is it a healthful place to live?

TAMBO. Now you asks something that is something. That place is sure a healthy place to live. Yes, sah, it sure is. Why, Mistah Interlocutor, it am so healthy out there we had to shoot a man to start a graveyard.



INTERLOCUTOR (*announcing to audience*). Mr. Harold Corby (*use real name of soloist*) will sing that favorite old ballad" (*name of song selected*).

(*Song by member of chorus*)

INTERLOCUTOR. What's the matter, Mr. Bones? Are you ill?

BONES. Yes, sah, I'm ill. Too much noise here.

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't quite get the connection. Too much noise makes you ill?

BONES. Uh-huh. Ill-o'-noise. I'm having quite some trouble with my back since I hurt it.

INTERLOCUTOR. That is too bad, indeed. Where did you hurt your back?

BONES. Right between the alley and the sacrum iliac joint.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, well, you surprise me. You seem to be quite familiar with anatomical terms.

BONES. I'm a lot more familiar with easy terms. Dollar down and more when they catch me.

INTERLOCUTOR. May I ask how you hurt your back?

BONES. Wheeling West Virginia.

INTERLOCUTOR. Wheeling, West Vir—Oh, yes. Very clever. Yes, Mr. Bones, I would consider that about the biggest job in the world.

BONES. There's one job bigger yet.

INTERLOCUTOR. Impossible.

BONES. I know one that's bigger.

INTERLOCUTOR. I would like to know of a job that is more difficult than Wheeling West Virginia.

BONES. Macon, Georgia.

INTERLOCUTOR. But about your back, Mr. Bones. You should see my brother. You know, I believe, that he is a doctor?

BONES. Oh, yes, I know it. He wanted to examine me once all over for ten dollars.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did you let him do it?

BONES. I told him it wasn't no use examining me for ten dollars, because I knowed he'd never find that much on me. I don't think he's much of a doctor, nohow.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, you surprise me. He has never lost a patient.

BONES. Course not. Did you ever hear of a dog losing a bone he'd *buried*?

INTERLOCUTOR. That is absolutely nothing but an insult to my brother's good name. I tell you my brother can cure anything.

BONES. Huh! He couldn't cure a ham.

INTERLOCUTOR. I insist—

BONES. How 'bout the time he treated that fellow for yellow jaundice? How 'bout that time?

INTERLOCUTOR. I do not recall the incident. What about the time he treated a man for yellow jaundice?

BONES. Yeah; what about it? Treated that poor man for seven years for yellow jaundice and then—

INTERLOCUTOR. And then what?

BONES. And then found out the man was a Chinaman.

INTERLOCUTOR (*announcing*). Mr. Tambo and Mr. Bones will now collaborate in an attempt to entertain you with a comedy number entitled "....."

(*Snappy comedy song by BONES and TAMBO.*)

BONES (*suddenly very loud*). The boy stood on the burning deck—

INTERLOCUTOR. Just a minute, Bones. You're out of order.

BONES. So's your dollar watch. The boy stood on the—

INTERLOCUTOR. Bones! What's the big idea, anyway?

BONES. I'm a poet. Hooray! I'm a poet! The boy stood on—

INTERLOCUTOR. What makes you think you're a poet?

BONES. 'Cause I need a haircut, and I ain't eat for a week. The boy stood—

INTERLOCUTOR. Forget the boy!

BONES. But, man alive, that poor boy's standing on the burning deck.

INTERLOCUTOR. If you are such a wonderful poet I'd like to hear something original. You did not write that.

BONES. You want something I writ?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, something written by you.

BONES. Well, listen to this one. It was written by me. It was wroten by me. Rotten by me—

INTERLOCUTOR. All right; all right! Let's hear it.

BONES.

A man bought a gun  
To have some fun,  
And he filled it full of shot.  
He pulled the trigger,  
Now his wife can't figure  
Where he's gone. Where he was he ain't not.

TAMBO (*is disgusted*). Mistah Interlocutor, if he's a poet I'm a monkey's uncle. Here's one I writ:

Poor little Mary's neck got hairy—

BONES. You mean Harry was necking Mary.

TAMBO. Button up.

Poor little Mary's neck got hairy—

BONES. You said that once.

TAMBO. She had two necks.

Poor little—

BONES. You mean she had a double chin?

TAMBO. Yeah. That's the reason she talked twice as much. Now listen.

Poor little Mary's neck got hairy;  
She went to the barber shop.  
The barber had Saint Vitus' dance  
And shaved her neck on the hop.  
He had to sneeze and he had to hop;  
And there was some time in that barber shop  
When the razor landed right on top  
Of Mary's head and cut the crop  
Of auburn tresses, and that wop  
Received a pop  
That sent him plop  
In the barber shop.  
And like a mop  
He took a flop  
When Mary walloped that scalloping fop.  
And that am all for now, old top.

BONES. Boy, that's ee-nough. You talk poetry like a Ford squeaks.

INTERLOCUTOR. To tell the truth, both of you ought to be shot at sunrise.

TAMBO. Not me. I don't get up that early.

INTERLOCUTOR. Perhaps there is something about being a poet that you boys do not realize. It takes brains to write good poetry.

BONES. There you is, Tambo. Smoke that.

TAMBO. He was looking at you when he said it.

BONES. All right, all right. But brains ain't the only thing worth while in this world.

INTERLOCUTOR. Brains are one of the big things in this world. The fact is, brains are the most important thing that man can possess.

BONES. No 'tain't. Pants am.

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you mean to say that trousers—

BONES. Pants!

INTERLOCUTOR. All right, then. Have it your way. Do you mean—

BONES. Two-legged pants.

INTERLOCUTOR. All right, all right! Did you ever hear of pants other than two-legged pants?

BONES. Uh-huh. Dog pants.

INTERLOCUTOR. We are getting too far away from the subject. You were trying to tell me that trousers—

BONES. PANTS!!

INTERLOCUTOR. All right! All right! That pants were more important to man than brains. Now how do you figure that?

BONES. Well, a man can go 'round without brains, but—I tell you pants am more important!

INTERLOCUTOR (*announcing*). Mr. Charles Raymond will now sing for your approval that beautiful sentimental number, "....."

(*Song by soloist*)

INTERLOCUTOR. What caused you to be late this evening, Tambo?

TAMBO. On my way here I got held up.

INTERLOCUTOR. You were held up? Where?

TAMBO. Down by the B. & O. railroad. (*Localize.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Tell us about it, will you?

TAMBO. Well, I was coming down Main Street (*localize*) and you know where it crosses the railroad track it am purty dark.

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, yes! Go on!

TAMBO. Well, sah, I was comin 'long there whistling, and just as I was agoin' to go cross the railroad tracks a freight train come 'long.



INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, yes! And then?

TAMBO. It held me up. 3

INTERLOCUTOR (*sighs*). Oh.

TAMBO. And while I was a-waiting for that freight to go past I got to thinking what I'd do if I was President.

INTERLOCUTOR. You certainly have an active imagination. What would you do if you were President?

TAMBO. I'd be all for the working people.

INTERLOCUTOR. Just how do you mean?

TAMBO. For one thing, I'd have nice big houses for every working man fit to live in. Yes, sah, I sure would if I had to build them myself. And I'd see that they got fed good, too. I'd have big five-pound loaves of bread for every working man if I had to bake them myself.

INTERLOCUTOR. You are a generous-hearted man.

TAMBO. And I'd have a big warm overcoat for every working man if I had to make them myself.

INTERLOCUTOR. Very good idea.

TAMBO. And I'd see to it that every working man had nice big fresh eggs for breakfast every morning if I had to lay—

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, now.

TAMBO. If I had to lay hold of every chicken in the country.

INTERLOCUTOR. Your thinking of being President is rather amusing. I doubt if you know where the Capitol of the United States is located.

TAMBO. Course I knows where the Capitol of the United States am.

INTERLOCUTOR. Where is it?

TAMBO. Washington, B. C.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, no. It's Washington, D. C. Do you know what D. C. stands for?

TAMBO. Because it can't set down.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, I mean what is the meaning of D. C.?

TAMBO. Dry Country.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, it does not.

TAMBO. Double Cross.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, no! D. C. means—

TAMBO. Oh, I know. Dogs and cats.

INTERLOCUTOR. I should say not.

TAMBO. What do you know about it, nohow?

INTERLOCUTOR. I know a lot about Washington, D. C. My brother at one time was chaplain there.

TAMBO. A which?

INTERLOCUTOR. A chaplain. Every morning he would go to the House of Representatives and pray for the Congressmen.

TAMBO. Say, I know 'nough about that to know that no chaplain ever goes in there and prays for the Congressmen.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, if he doesn't pray for the Congressmen who does he pray for?

TAMBO. Why, de chaplain goes in there and looks over that congregation of Congressmen, and then prays for the country.

INTERLOCUTOR (*announces next number on program*).

(*Song*)

BONES. Mistah Intercolutor, I'm worried.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, now that's too bad. What seems to be the cause of your worry?

BONES. Well, I went and bought a bar of green soap.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well?

BONES. And I paid two bits for it, too.

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't see anything to be worried about. You paid twenty-five cents for a bar of green soap.

BONES. But, dog-gone it, the soap am green.

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, so you said. The soap is green. But what about it?

BONES. I took it home and tried it out, and it makes white suds.

TAMBO. For the love of mud, take him out and shoot him. We got a black cow what gives white milk, but we isn't worryin'.

BONES (*threateningly to TAMBO*). And I got a black fist what makes black eyes.

TAMBO. Tut, tut! Pooh, pooh!

BONES. I don't care how much you tut-tuts. But if you starts pooh-poohing I'll climb right up you one-two-three.

TAMBO. Uh-huh. And you'll climb right down again, four-five-six.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, now, boys.

BONES (*nods his head towards TAMBO*). That thing over there is a pain in the neck.

TAMBO (*nods his head towards BONES*). That thing over there sure ain't no aspirin tablet.

BONES (*to INTERLOCUTOR*). I can tell you one thing. If I was as tall as him, and he was as short as I am he'd be all wrong. Let me ax him just one little question.

INTERLOCUTOR. Go ahead.

BONES (*to TAMBO*). You think you is so dog-gone smart. What's the difference between a red onion and a white onion?

TAMBO. How does I know the difference between a red onion and a white onion?

BONES. See? He don't even know his onions.

TAMBO. That question isn't got no sense, nohow. Now you answer me this one: What am vacuum?

BONES. I don't know, and furthermore, you doesn't either.

TAMBO. Course I knows.

BONES. Then splanify.

TAMBO. Vacuum am a sort of—That am, vacuum am a thing—Not 'zactly a thing, either. It am—To tell the truth, it am hard to splanify. I can't just put it in words, but I got it in my head—

BONES. We knows that.

INTERLOCUTOR. I'll explain what vacuum is, boys. Vacuum is a—er—Well, to put it roughly, vacuum is a matter—Well, no, one could hardly call it matter, either. It really isn't anything at all. It's like this: Vacuum is—Why, surely you boys have heard what vacuum is.

BONES. Oh, yes, but I never heard the details explained before.

INTERLOCUTOR (*announces song*).

(*Song*)

TAMBO. Mistah Interlocutor, is you still working on the Blah-Blah Newspaper? (*Name local newspaper.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I'm still there. I have had a new column assigned to me called the "Ask Me Column."

TAMBO. Ask you what?

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, you see, it's this way: Any readers of the paper are privileged to write in to me asking any question they desire, and it's up to me to answer these questions through the Ask Me Column. (*Takes small paper from pocket.*) I have a number of questions here that I have been unable to answer, so I brought them along this evening in the hopes that you boys might be able to help me out. (TAMBO and BONES assume important poses.) Now the answer to the first question I will leave up to you, Mr. Tambo. The second I'll depend upon Mr. Bones to answer, and so on. (*Looks at paper.*) "Why do they put holes in limburger cheese?"

TAMBO. So the smell can get out.

INTERLOCUTOR. A very logical answer. Now, Mr. Bones, "Would you marry for money?"

BONES. Not if I could get it any other way.

INTERLOCUTOR. Mr. Tambo, "Scientifically speaking, what is an icicle?"

TAMBO. A stiff piece of water.

INTERLOCUTOR. Bones, "What are three of the greatest mysteries yet unsolved?"

BONES. Woman, love, and hash.

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, "What becomes of all the bugs in the winter?"

TAMBO (*fidgeting*). You can search me

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, Bones, "Is it true that matches are made in heaven?"

BONES. Maybe, but they stick one end in the other place.

INTERLOCUTOR. Oh, Bones, I just happened to think—

BONES. I thought I heard something rattle.

INTERLOCUTOR. I was passing your place this morning—

BONES. Thanks.

INTERLOCUTOR. Thanks? What for?

BONES. For passing.

INTERLOCUTOR. Anyway, I was passing your house and I heard you growling about something.

BONES. Did you hear me growling?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I heard you growling.

BONES. Maybe you did. I had sausage for breakfast.

TAMBO. Hey! Got any more questions?

INTERLOCUTOR. Just two more. "Is married life always a bed of roses?"

TAMBO. 'Tain't a bed. It's a "bunk."

INTERLOCUTOR. Here's the last one, evidently from a woman. "What is a monkey-wrench?" That one is up to you, Bones. What is a monkey-wrench?

BONES. Well, Mistah Interlocutor, if you'd stub your toe and sprain your ankle, that would be a monkey wrench.



INTERLOCUTOR (*to BONES who has been yawning*). Surely, Bones, you are not sleepy already?

BONES. I sure is. Ain't had no sleep for three nights.

INTERLOCUTOR. Insomnia?

BONES. No; in bed.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why can't you sleep?

BONES. Well, I'll tell you. Last week I went to sleep and I dreamed I owed a man a hundred dollars. And, by-golly, when I woke up the next morning I did really owe a man one hundred dollars. Now I'm afraid to go to sleep again.

INTERLOCUTOR. But why are you afraid to go to sleep?

BONES. I'm afraid if I go to sleep I'll pay him.

INTERLOCUTOR. Dreams are queer, and many superstitious folks think there is a significance connected with every dream. Now just last night I dreamed I was the father of six little pickaninnies.

BONES. Mmmm! Mmmm! That's a bad sign.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why do you say that?

BONES. You dreamed you was the father of six little pickaninnies?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I did. What would you say that was a sign of?

BONES. Dark, dark days ahead. I had a funny dream not long ago. I dreamed I was in the Ark.

INTERLOCUTOR. That really was a funny dream.

BONES. I was sitting in the (*local*) railroad station and went to sleep. Maybe that had something to do with dreaming about the Ark. Anyway, I dreamed I was in the Ark watching animals and things come on board. Everything come on board in pairs except the worms.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why didn't the worms come in pairs?

BONES. Because they come in apples. And that makes me think. Why is a man like a worm?

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't know. Why is a man like a worm?

BONES. Because he'll wiggle around enjoying himself until some chicken comes along and gobbles him. And then he'll live like a bird.

INTERLOCUTOR. I presume you mean some girl will come along and then he will marry her?

BONES. Yep.

INTERLOCUTOR. But why do you say that after they are married he'll live like a bird?

BONES. He'll have to fly for his life. Just yesterday I was over in the park and a woman tried to flirt with me.

INTERLOCUTOR. You don't tell me!

BONES. Well, I'm trying to. I says to her, "Listen, Lizzie, who are you, anyway? And she says (*imitates haughty woman*), "I'm a woman—Nature's noblest piece of architecture. Who are you?" (*Laughs.*)

INTERLOCUTOR. Well?

BONES. I told her I was a building inspector.

(*Song*)

INTERLOCUTOR. What are you thinking so seriously about, Mr. Tambo?

TAMBO. I was just thinking that if I was a horse I'd be happy.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, what a peculiar thought. Why do you say you would be happy if you were a horse?

TAMBO. Because a horse is worth more than a man.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now, how do you figure that a horse is worth more than a man?

TAMBO. Well, you take a horse that's well broke and he's worth money. But you take a man that's well broke and he ain't worth a cent.

INTERLOCUTOR. From all indications you are broke right now, Tambo.

TAMBO. Say, I'm so broke I'd make Humpty-Dumpty look like a piker.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, you know, Tambo, there is only one way to keep from being broke.

TAMBO. Oh, boy, oh, boy, break the news to me, and break it quick.

INTERLOCUTOR. When you get a dollar in your hand, keep it there.

TAMBO. Mistah Interlocutor, there is only one thing in this world that is more slippery than a dollar in my hand.

INTERLOCUTOR. What is that?

TAMBO. A pair of eels wrestling on a cake of ice.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, cheer up, Tambo. If you're broke you won't have to worry about spending your money foolishly.

TAMBO. Right now I'm worried about something I foolishly spent money for before I went broke.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did you buy? A used car, or some hair tonic to grow hair on the head of your bed?

TAMBO. No, sah. I went and spent my last dollar for a book on how to make love.

INTERLOCUTOR. That may not be so foolish as it appears to be.

TAMBO. There's one place in that dog-gone book that spoils everything for me.

INTERLOCUTOR. How do you mean?

TAMBO. It says you put your arm around the gal you loves, look deep into her eyes, and say, "Clarice, I love you!"

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, what's wrong with that?

TAMBO. Dog-gone it, man, my gal's name is Mary.

(Song)

INTERLOCUTOR. Bones, I believe I saw your father-in-law on the street today.

BONES. How do you know it was my father-in-law?

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, I thought it was, anyway. He was wearing a light spring topcoat.

BONES. Yep, that was him. Wasn't that coat spiffy?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, it was rather nobby.

BONES. I gave him that.

INTERLOCUTOR. You did?

BONES. Yep. And did you see that wonderful brain lid he was wearing?

INTERLOCUTOR. I noticed he had on a new hat.

BONES. I gave him that. And did you see that dandy watch chain draped across his vest?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I took particular notice of that. Very nice, indeed.

BONES. I gave him that. And did you see that black eye he had?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I did.

BONES. He got that from his wife.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why is it that you buy so many clothes for him?

BONES. Because he's too stingy to buy any. Honest, that's the tightest man that ever was. Yes, sah, he sure is. Last Christmas he opened his pocketbook to pay for a handkerchief for his wife a present and a June bug jumped out.

INTERLOCUTOR. He can't surely be that stingy.

BONES. Say, listen. He wouldn't pay two bits to see the Battle of Bunker Hill fought with the original cast. Mmmm! Mmmmm! He sure am tight. Last week he was invited to a golden wedding, and you know what he took them for a present:

INTERLOCUTOR. Something of gold, I presume.

BONES. Uh-huh. A goldfish and fourteen carrots. Before I married his daughter I wanted to get in right with the old

man so I took him to Chicago. We hadn't been there twenty minutes 'til he had the inside of his mouth all sunburnt looking at the high buildings. Then I found a Spanish restaurant and took him in and told him to order anything he wanted and I'd pay for it. And that dog-gone man ordered two big boiled hams and sent 'em home to his wife. And then he looked on the menu and found that steak and mushrooms was the most expensive dish and ordered some of that. The waiters couldn't understand anything but Spanish so they didn't know what my father-in-law wanted.

INTERLOCUTOR. How did he get it across to them?

BONES. Well, he took his pencil and drew a picture of a cow and two mushrooms. The waiter seemed to understand what the picture was because he took the paper and went out in the kitchen. Pretty soon he came back.

INTERLOCUTOR. With steak and mushrooms?

BONES. I should say not. He brought in two umbrellas and a glass of milk. Where was you going when you saw my father-in-law?

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, I was on my way down to your house, but when I got there you had left.

BONES. What do you think of my bungalow?

INTERLOCUTOR. Rather nice place. But it isn't a bungalow.

BONES. Sure, that's a bungalow. It's the biggest bungle I ever lived in and we still owe for it.

INTERLOCUTOR. There is one thing about that house I don't understand.

BONES. How it hangs together? If we ever tear off the wallpaper it won't.

INTERLOCUTOR. No, I was referring to those two holes in the bottom of the kitchen door.

BONES. Them's for the cats to go out through.

INTERLOCUTOR. But why two holes?

BONES. We got two cats.

INTERLOCUTOR. But listen. Isn't one hole enough for the two cats?

BONES. No, sah. When my wife says "scat" she means "scat!"

*(Song)*

BONES. Tambo, I'se been wanting to tell you something for a long, long time.

TAMBO. Go ahead; go ahead. There ain't no detour signs on my ears. What you crave to unlighten me on?

BONES. I craves to unlightens you that you is the dumbest coon that ever was.

TAMBO. O-O!

BONES. I craves to tell you that you is lower than a cow's heel.

TAMBO. O-O!

BONES. I craves to tell you that you is the tightest no-good niggah in town.

TAMBO. O-O!

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, I am surprised to see you sit there and take all that without flinching.

TAMBO. Just wait. I got something to tell him, too.

BONES. I craves to tell you that you is the biggest cheat that ever got in a 'spectable crap game.

TAMBO. O-O!

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, how can you let a man call you all those names without protesting?

TAMBO. Just wait. When he gets through I'se going to land right into him.

BONES. I craves to tell you that you is the most shiftless, wuthless, no-account piece o' humaninity that ever was, and ever is going to be. Smoke all that in your pipe.



INTERLOCUTOR. Now, Tambo, it is certainly up to you.

TAMBO. Bones, is you all through?

BONES. I is.

TAMBO. You isn't got no more to say?

BONES. I isn't.

TAMBO. Den you listen to me. All them things what you says I is you is. Reckon that's telling you some.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, well, Tambo, you can be ferocious, can't you?

TAMBO. Yes, sah. But did you hear about me?

INTERLOCUTOR. Did I hear what about you?

TAMBO. Great man.

INTERLOCUTOR. Who is a great man?

TAMBO. Me.

INTERLOCUTOR. How do you mean?

TAMBO. I'm a inventor.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now what in the world did you ever invent?

TAMBO. Colored electricity.

INTERLOCUTOR. Colored electricity?

TAMBO. Yep. Red electricity for red lights. Green electricity for green lights. Blue electricity for blue lights.

INTERLOCUTOR. Just a minute, Tambo. What do you use for reading lights?

TAMBO. Feathers.

INTERLOCUTOR. Feathers?

TAMBO. Uh-huh! A feather's light enough for anybody. Then I invents a special light for Hebrews.

INTERLOCUTOR. What kind of a light did you invent for the Hebrews?

TAMBO. Israelite. And then right on top of them great inventions I made a compass for dill pickles.

INTERLOCUTOR. A compass for dill pickles? Now what in the name of common sense is the use of a compass for dill pickles?

TAMBO. Great invention. When you bites the pickle you can tell which way it am going to squirt.

(Song)

TAMBO. Howcome, Mistah Interlocutor, you isn't sporting around in that car o' yours every Sunday no more?

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, Tambo, I don't have so much leisure on Sundays any more. I've joined the church.

TAMBO. O-O!

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I became a member of the Methodist Church and was baptized.

TAMBO. Huh? You was baptized into the Methodist Church?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, sir, I was baptized in the Methodist Church.

TAMBO. Wake up, man, wake up! You wasn't baptized. You was just dry-cleaned.

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't think it would hurt you to do the same thing. I understand you have been running around of late rather wildly.

TAMBO. I just been eating too much meat, that's all. I isn't missed a Sunday going to church for ten years.

INTERLOCUTOR. That proves it.

TAMBO. Proves what?

INTERLOCUTOR. It proves a rumor that I heard yesterday that you were the biggest liar in seventeen states.

TAMBO (*proudly*). Well, if I does say it myself, I is some liar. The fact am, I'se the chapiom liar of the world.

INTERLOCUTOR. Not chapiom; champion.

TAMBO. I can't say champion.

INTERLOCUTOR. You just said it.

TAMBO. I did? I sure didn't mean to.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, Tambo, as a professional liar I consider myself unparalleled; I really believe I can out-lie any man living.

TAMBO. What do you sell? Used cars?

INTERLOCUTOR. No. I simply lie for the fun I get out of it. Just for the sport of it I'll bet you twenty dollars that I can tell a bigger lie than you can. (*Takes out bill.*) And here's my money.

TAMBO (*takes out bill*). I'll just fade you.

INTERLOCUTOR. How about letting Bones hold the money?

TAMBO. Be all right if you get somebody to hold Bones.

INTERLOCUTOR. You really don't distrust a man like Bones, do you?

TAMBO. Well, not if he ain't too much like him. But I can tell you one thing. All the chickens living near him roosts high. Let him hold the money if you wants to. I can run faster'n he can and I know I'll win the bet.

INTERLOCUTOR. I'm not sure of that. In fact, I'm so certain of winning the bet that I am going to put another twenty dollar bill on top of my other one. I'll bet you two to one. (*Takes out another bill.*) Come over here, Bones. (*The three men gather down center and Bones takes their money.*) Now understand this correctly. All the money goes to the one who tells the biggest lie.

TAMBO. Uh-huh. Dat's me.

INTERLOCUTOR. We'll see. Here is my lie: One afternoon last summer I decided to run over to Paris for lunch—

TAMBO. O-O!

INTERLOCUTOR. I intended flying in my airplane, but the engine and propeller had been removed for repair and I was up against it. So I drove into the country until I found an old windmill. I removed the fan from the windmill, took it back home and attached it to the front of my plane. I crawled in and actually whirled that fan so fast with my hands that I made a perfect non-stop flight to Paris in time for lunch.

TAMBO. O-O! How did you get back?

INTERLOCUTOR. In the same manner. On my way back I met a man in the middle of the ocean swimming from New York to Paris to buy a new hat. I stopped and talked to him a bit. (*He reaches for the money but TAMBO gently pushes him back.*)

TAMBO. Just a minute.

INTERLOCUTOR. You don't mean to say that you can beat that one?

TAMBO. I was wondering about that man swimming. You actually saw this man way out there in the middle of the ocean swimming from New York to Paris to buy a new hat?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, sir, I actually did.

TAMBO. You made one little mistake. That was his second trip that morning. He'd been over once and bought a hat, but when he got home he found it was too small and was going back to change it.

INTERLOCUTOR. How do you know he was?

TAMBO. Because I was that swimmer. (*Grabs money.*)

INTERLOCUTOR (*as the ends go to their respective chairs.*) Ladies and Gentlemen, the finale by the entire company.

(*Entire company stands, each member picking up his tambourine, and sing the closing number in a rousing manner. The curtain descends on the final notes of song.*)

## MINSTREL BITS

## BETWEEN INTERLOCUTOR AND ENDS

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, did I understand you to say that you were going to Washington?

TAMBO. Tomorrow.

INTERLOCUTOR. Pleasure trip?

TAMBO. Nope. Going to take my wife along. I got a wonderful idea that I want to tell the Postmaster General about.

INTERLOCUTOR. What is this wonderful idea, if I may ask?

TAMBO. It's a sign to put on the top of every mail box: "Post no Bills."

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Remember, Bones, it is deeds, not words, that count.

BONES. Did you ever send a telegram?

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Who was that new girl you were with last night, Tambo?

TAMBO. That wasn't a new one. Just the old one painted over.

INTERLOCUTOR. What is her name?

TAMBO. Ida.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ida what?

TAMBO. Ida Noe.

INTERLOCUTOR. You surely know her last name.

TAMBO. Of course I do.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, what is her name, then?

TAMBO. Ida Noe. Ida Noe. I-d-a N-o-e.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why didn't you say so in the first place?

TAMBO. I dunno.

INTERLOCUTOR. What was all the excitement in that restaurant last night, Bones?

BONES. A big fat man took a big fat bite out of a big fat club sandwich.

INTERLOCUTOR. Well?

BONES. And the club stuck in his throat.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, if I were you I'd certainly be ashamed of my stupidity.

TAMBO. Now, what's the matter?

INTERLOCUTOR. Your wife told me what you were doing yesterday. I never realized that you were so dumb before.

TAMBO. Don't keep me in suspenders. What are you yapping about? What did I do?

INTERLOCUTOR. Imagine a man of common sense pouring hot water down a hen's mouth to make her lay hard-boiled eggs.

TAMBO. That ain't nothing. I saw you try it on a rooster.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Mistah Interlocutor, I saw Bert Smith with something on his arm last night that he's going to have an awful time getting rid of.

INTERLOCUTOR. Good gracious! What was it?

BONES. Your sister.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Did you take that little vacation into the country that you were contemplating, Tambo?

TAMBO. Oh, yes. I didn't care much about going, but the doctor told me to go for the change and rest.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did you enjoy the change and rest?

TAMBO. Immensely! The waiters there got all the change and the landlord got the rest.



INTERLOCUTOR. How is your brother coming that had the dropsy, Bones?

BONES. He's about the same.

INTERLOCUTOR. Did the doctor tap him as you told me he intended doing?

BONES. No. My brother's wife wouldn't let him. She said there was never anything tapped in their house that ever lasted over a week.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. What's wrong, Tambo? You look all broken up about something.

TAMBO. I didn't sleep well last night. The fact is, I fell out of bed.

INTERLOCUTOR. Ha, ha! Perhaps you slept too near where you got in.

TAMBO. No, that wasn't it. I slept too near where I fell out.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I saw your red-headed sister this morning.

INTERLOCUTOR. My red-headed sister? My sister's hair is auburn. It isn't red.

BONES. No, it ain't red. Oh, no, it ain't red. Every time she goes out in the back yard after dark the roosters think it's sunrise and start crowing.

INTERLOCUTOR. I object. One of my sisters has auburn hair—beautiful auburn hair. And the other sister is a decided blonde.

BONES. Your other sister has hair the color of a mouse.

INTERLOCUTOR. That's an insult. I tell you she's a decided blonde.

BONES. Well, I ain't seen her for a week. When did she decide?

TAMBO. Mistah Interlocutor, when I was coming in here this evening a man stopped me and wanted to know where you was.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did he want with me?

TAMBO. He wanted to collect a bill you owed him.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did he look like?

TAMBO. He looked like you'd better pay him.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Speaking of recent inventions, have you heard about the machine for telling when a man is lying?

BONES. Yeah. I married one.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. I never was so shocked in all my life as I was yesterday. I saw your brother sneaking home in a barrel. What was the matter?

TAMBO. He sued a man for salt and battery, and lost his suit.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Well Bones, did you have a successful trip up in the North woods?

BONES. Very much so. Yes, sir, very much so.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did you hunt mostly?

BONES. The way back to camp.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Look here, Tambo, you told me a bit ago that you were going to buy me a chocolate sundæ.

TAMBO. Well, 'tain't Sunday yet, is it?

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Did you ever hear the story about the bumble-bee?

INTERLOCUTOR. No, what is it?

BONES. Let the bumble be.

INTERLOCUTOR. There's nothing to that to raise laughter.

BONES. No, but there's plenty there to raise bumps.

INTERLOCUTOR. They tell me that if one stands very still a bumble-bee will walk all over one without doing any harm.

BONES. It's all right as long as they keep on walking. But, lawsy! When they sits down and pushes! That's howcome we got royal blood in our family.

INTERLOCUTOR. How do you mean you have royal blood in your family?

BONES. My grandmother was stung by a queen bee.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, Tambo, what are you so elated about?

CO. SCHOOLS

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TAMBO. Made a great discovery.

INTERLOCUTOR. Would you mind telling us what your great discovery is?

TAMBO. I discovered how to get a set of teeth for nothing.

INTERLOCUTOR. My, what a wonderful discovery. How would you proceed to get a set of teeth for nothing?

TAMBO. Go in somebody's back yard and kick a strange bulldog.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. I understand that you and Bill Hicks have dissolved partnership in the ash hauling business.

BONES. Yes, sah; we had too much difficulty counting the money we took in.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, how was that?

BONES. Didn't take in enough to count.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, what made you so late in getting here this evening?

TAMBO. Well, I'll tell you. My wife lost the lid off'n the cookstove and I had to sit on the hole to keep the smoke in 'til she found the lid.

\* \* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. What do you get out of that old car you drive, Bones?

BONES. When my wife's along I get about ten thousand words to the gallon.

INTERLOCUTOR. I don't imagine you paid very much for that car.

BONES. I got that car so dog-gone cheap I can't get over it. But, man, I sure get under it enough.

INTERLOCUTOR. I noticed yesterday when you passed me you had a miss in the engine.

BONES. Yeah, but did you notice that miss I had in the back seat?

INTERLOCUTOR. How fast will your car go?

BONES. It stays just two months ahead of my income.

INTERLOCUTOR. But what is your income?

BONES. One o'clock in the morning.

INTERLOCUTOR. That isn't very early, is it?

BONES. One o'clock is the earliest time you can find on a clock.

INTERLOCUTOR. I'd like to know something. What makes you so foolish?

BONES. A cuckoo clock fell on my head. The doctor said I'd o' had brain fever but I didn't have no place to have it.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. The propaganda was passed around—

TAMBO. The what?

INTERLOCUTOR. The propaganda. You surely know what propaganda means?

TAMBO. Oh, sure, I know.

INTERLOCUTOR. I doubt if you do. Just what is propaganda?

TAMBO. Well, sah, I was out to my Uncle Mose's farm awhile back, and you can believe it or not, but he had ten thousand geese there.

INTERLOCUTOR. If anybody but you had told me I wouldn't believe it.

TAMBO. While I was there a man drove over and took a look at Uncle Mose's geese. And he says to Uncle Mose, "Where did you done get all them geese?" And my Uncle Mose says, "Raised 'em myself." "How many did you have to start with?" says the man. "Six," says Uncle Mose. Then the man says, "Mose, you sure 'nough must o' had the propah gander."

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. I might say that I'm a man of very few words.

BONES. I'm married, too. Me and my wife had some words last night, all right.

INTERLOCUTOR. You did?

BONES. Yep. But I didn't get a chance to use mine.

INTERLOCUTOR. I suppose you two always patch up your quarrels with love and kisses.

BONES. No, sah. Court plaster and arnica.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. I wonder, Tambo, if you could lend me five dollars?

TAMBO. Sure. But I want to ask one favor.

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes?

TAMBO. Don't worry about paying it back.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why shouldn't I worry about paying it back?

TAMBO. Because there's no use of both of us worrying.

INTERLOCUTOR. Now listen here, Bones. Have you ever seen me when I had more liquor than I could carry?

BONES. Mebbe I ain't. But I've seen you when you should have made two or three trips with your load.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. What was your sister so excited about yesterday?

TAMBO. She just found out that her husband got a divorce.

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you think she will marry again?

TAMBO. I don't know, but she always has.

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Have you a cold, Bones?

BONES. Bad cold.

INTERLOCUTOR. What are you doing for it?

BONES. Coughing.

INTERLOCUTOR. Do you know where you got your cold?

BONES. If I did I'd take it back.

INTERLOCUTOR. Your resistance is low. You should eat more onions. Onions, you know, build you up physically.

BONES. Yeah, but they pull you down socially.

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, I could live on nothing but onions alone.

BONES. If that's all you would live on you ought to be alone. Eating onions is like getting married.

INTERLOCUTOR. In what way?

BONES. After you do it you wonder *why* you ever did it.

INTERLOCUTOR. Speaking of onions, here's one I heard this morning: If an onion will make you cry, what vegetable can make you laugh?

BONES. Well, you might get a "cackle" out of an egg-plant.

INTERLOCUTOR. This may not be exactly the right time to speak of it, Bones, but about that letter you sent me.

BONES. You means that letter I writ asking you to pay back that money you owes me?

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, er—yes. I noticed you wrote P. S. at the bottom of the letter, but added no line, as the P. S. might signify that you were going to.

BONES. I thought that P. S. was enough. You know what it meant, don't you?

INTERLOCUTOR. Why, no, I do not.

BONES. P. S.: Pay Soon. Pay Some! Pay Something!

\* \* \* \*

INTERLOCUTOR. Tambo, I've often wondered how you made a living when you were out west.

TAMBO. Writing.

INTERLOCUTOR. You made a living writing?

TAMBO. Uh-huh.

INTERLOCUTOR. What did you write?

TAMBO. Letters—home for money.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Mistah Interlocutor, did you ever notice how dirty Pittsburgh is?

INTERLOCUTOR. Yes, I have. But it's really unavoidable with all the smoke and—

BONES. A month from now it'll be a lot cleaner.

INTERLOCUTOR. How do you know it will be a lot cleaner?

BONES. I'm going to Pittsburgh and start a crap game and clean up the place. I sure cleaned Tambo last night.

TAMBO. Humph! I wasn't very dirty to start with.



## COMEBACKS BETWEEN THE ENDMEN

BONES. What nationality are you?

TAMBO. Scotch. I was born bare-legged.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I wonder what that bump is on my head.

TAMBO. You had water on the brain and it came to a boil.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I ain't smoked a cigar for a month.

TAMBO. What's the matter? Had lumbago and couldn't stoop over?

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Next Saturday I'm going to celebrate my wedding anniversary. Been married just one year.

TAMBO. That ain't no celebration. That's a post mortem.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. What do you think of a girl that would get stuck on a thing like that?

TAMBO. Get stuck on what?

BONES. Fly-paper.

TAMBO. I'd think she was a little fly.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Look here, big boy. Did you say that I was a liar?

TAMBO. I should say I didn't call you a liar.

BONES. Then what did you say?

TAMBO. All I said was, that the way you said some things they sure was unrecognizable.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Was that you I seen down at the blacksmith shop shoeing a horse?

TAMBO. I was down there, but I was shoeing flies.

BONES. Man, don't you ever get the idea that you is going to hit me hard enough to kill me.

TAMBO. Maybe I ain't never going to hit you hard enough to kill you, but if I ever hits you, you is going to bounce so long you is going to starve to death.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I understands you is a salesman now.

TAMBO. Yep.

BONES. What's your line?

TAMBO. Salt. I'm a salt-seller. What's your line?

BONES. Pepper. I'm a pepper-seller.

TAMBO. Shake.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. What's your favorite joke book?

TAMBO. The Congressional Record.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Do you know of anything that is good for big feet?

TAMBO. Uh-huh. Big shoes.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I got the funniest dog. He never eats meat on Monday.

TAMBO. Howcome he never eats meat on Monday?

BONES. I never gives him any on Monday.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. My dog is lost.

TAMBO. Why don't you put a advertisement in the newspaper?

BONES. That wouldn't do no good. He can't read.

TAMBO. Is he a pedigreed dog?

BONES. I'll say he is. If he could talk he wouldn't speak to either one of us.

TAMBO. What kind of a dog is he?

BONES. I don't know. All I know is he's a great tobacco chewer.

TAMBO. I see. He's a Spitz. Is his tail long or short?

BONES. Very short. He got in front of a street car one time.

TAMBO. And it cut his tail off?

BONES. No. It drove it in.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. When is Bill going to get out'n the hospital?

TAMBO. Not for a long, long time.

BONES. Did you see his doctor?

TAMBO. No, big boy, but I seen his nurse. Ooooo-la-la!

BONES. Trained nurse?

TAMBO. She looks like she's full of tricks.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. How did you and your wife ever come to get married?

TAMBO. I don't know. We just started out to be good friends, and then changed our minds.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Hey, Tambo, I hear you-all was in a free-for-all fight last night.

TAMBO. Free-for-all nothing. Cost me ten dollars and costs.

BONES. Fine?

TAMBO. Not very.

BONES. I'll admit I'm the same as everybody else. I'm a descendant from the monkey.

TAMBO. The only difference with you is you got a return ticket.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I thought you said you was going with a circus.

TAMBO. I did. But at the first town everything went floo-ey.

BONES. Howcome?

TAMBO. We lost the place where the tent was supposed to be.

BONES. How zat?

TAMBO. The cook made the coffee outdoors and the elephant come along and swallowed the grounds.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I sure got a great train of thoughts.

TAMBO. Yeah, but you isn't got no terminal.

BONES. Don't insinuate. I come from a family of brains.

TAMBO. Was you disinherited?

BONES. My father occupied the chair of applied science.

TAMBO. That's nothing. My father occupied the chair of applied electricity.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I have a wonderful sense of humor.

TAMBO. I know you have. I met your wife.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. My father was a great soldier. He was a drummer boy.

TAMBO. My father knew your father, and he said at the first shot your father would take his drum and beat it.

BONES. I never hurry nor worry.

TAMBO. I didn't know you worked for the government.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I never drink; I never smoke; I never swear; I never stay out nights; I never—

TAMBO. Which do you like to do best? Crochet or knit?

\* \* \* \*

BONES. What did you have that string tied around your finger for last night?

TAMBO. That was to remind my wife to ask me if I forgot anything she told me to remember.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Is you still working for the same man?

TAMBO. Yeah. I took an interest in the business last week.

BONES. Am that a fact?

TAMBO. Yep. The boss said if I didn't take an interest in the business he'd fire me.

BONES. Why don't you take out some fire insurance, then he can't fire you?

TAMBO. He won't fire me as long as I take an interest in my work, and if I don't take an interest in my work I'd better take out some life insurance so he won't kill me.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I thought you told me you was working in a foundry.

TAMBO. Was, but I quit. I'm going to sue that company.

BONES. How come?

TAMBO. They blowed the quitting whistle while I was carrying a heavy piece o' iron and I dropped it on my foot.

BONES. Why didn't you lay it down?

TAMBO. After the whistle blowed? Man, I belongs to the union.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Listen, Tambo, I wish you'd help me out. You know that gal I met at the dance last week?

TAMBO. Uh-huh.

BONES. Well, she hangs 'round me too much. I want to get rid o' her. I wish you'd tell her a lot o' lies about me and sort o' discourage her.

TAMBO. If you wants to get rid o' her in a hurry let me tell the truth about you.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. What's the difference between a old maid and a married woman?

TAMBO. That ain't no difference. The old maid is always looking for a husband, and so is a married woman. Did you hear the song I wrote?

BONES. What it am?

TAMBO. "You Can Never Find Your Husband Where You Thought You Left Him Parked."

\* \* \* \*

BONES. I went up yesterday to get a marriage license, but they cost five dollars and I only had two dollars.

TAMBO. What did the license clerk say?

BONES. He told me I was lucky.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Tambo, what am quicksilver?

TAMBO. The kind I get on pay-day. It sure goes quick.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. What's a matter, Tambo? Is you broke again?

TAMBO. Flatter'n a snake's heel, Bones. I done had a little balance in the bank, and then I got engaged to that gal and—

BONES. Ah, love makes the world go round.

TAMBO. Yeah, but I didn't think it 'ud go round so dog-gone fast that it 'ud make me lose my balance.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. When I kissed that gal I smelled tobacco on her lips.

TAMBO. Does she smoke?

BONES. That's just the trouble. I know she don't.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Look here, Tambo. Does you know that your chickens has been coming over in my yard?

TAMBO. I thought so.

BONES. How come you thought so?

TAMBO. Because they never come back.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. There's one thing sure. I knows how to drive a car.

TAMBO. Yes, you does. Man, if you was driving across the Sahara Desert you'd hit a fire hydrant.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Did you-all hear about Shinbone Jackson getting pinched for stealing a calendar?

TAMBO. No. What did he get?

BONES. Twelve months.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Tambo, am Tadpole Brown one o' your blood relations?

TAMBO. Boy, he's the bloodiest one I got.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. What am larceny?

TAMBO. That am stealing against the law.



BONES. Poor Jim got pinched for drinking his wife's perfume.

TAMBO. My goodness! What was the charge?

BONES. Fragrancy.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Tambo, does you know how to play gulf?

TAMBO. You doesn't mean gulf, Bones. You means golf.

BONES. What's the difference?

TAMBO. Gulf am a waste of water.

BONES. Uh-huh, and golf am a waste of time.

\* \* \* \*

BONES. Where did you done say that baseball hit your mother-in-law?

TAMBO. Why, on the—er—er—on the bounce, big boy, on the bounce.

## INSECTS, INVITES, IN TROUBLE

### A MONOLOGUE

Hello, soaks—croaks—I mean folks:

I'se jest out here by ax'dent. So put yoh bricks back in yoh pocket.

I was comin' down de street mindin' evahbody's business 'cept mah own when de man'ger ob de theatre grabs me by de neck an' yanks me 'round. Mmmmm! Mmmmm! Dat man shuah 'nough was desp'rate.

He says to me, "Man, was you evah on?"

I says, "No, sah, but I'se been in quite some times."

Den he splanifies dat one ob de men wot was s'posed to undress de audience—reckon he done said address de audience. Anyway, he done say one ob his men done hab his tonsils took out an' didn't git dem put back in ag'in, an' dat he jest hab to hab somebody make a speech.

I says, "Look heah, boss, I can't make no speech when I don't know wot to talk 'bout." He says I could talk 'bout fo' minutes an' den run.

Dat last remahk done sounded mo' like a warnin' dan advice. Now when I gits through, if you sees me runnin', you's gwine know right off dat mah feets kin scent danger. Mmmmm! Mmmmm! Mah feets shuah got a pow'ful scent.

De man'ger says to me, "Boy did you evah stood up befoh a large gadderin' ob people an' make a speech?"

An' I says, "Yes, sah."

"Wot you done say?" axes de man'ger.

"Not guilty," I says.

So heah I is.

Now de subject ob mah discoursement dis ebenin' I is selected am wot is knowed in de scientifical world as bugology, bugs bein' de uppermost things on my head—I mean on mah mind.

Now den, bugs am diwided into two classes: Friendly bugs, an' bugs wot am skeered ob you. De friendly bugs'll stick to you like glue, while dem wot am skeered ob you am mice, chicken-hawks an' rabbits. Bugs wif lots a' legs am called centipedes, while dem wot isn't got so many legs am called velocipedes, tricycles an' scooters. Durin' de war dere was quite some bugs dat was called cooties. Dem cooties am de same as scooters. Dey allus scooted to some place else whar you wasn't scratchin'. Since de war dere hab been wot am called radio bugs. 'Coddin' to de scientifickers, one radio bug kin kilocycle at one hundred yards. Or it kin kill two cycles at fifty yards. A cycle am somethin' dat kin go 'round an' 'round. Among de bestes knowed cycles dat goes 'round an' 'round am merry-go-rounds an' bill c'lectors.

Bugs don't live at de North Pole. Nothin' lives at de North Pole 'cept pole-cats. Bugs is nevah found fu'ther north den de fo'ty-sebenth latitude which done bisects de fo'teenth degree an' sebenteen minutes at de longitude. Dis am account dat de shequator which runs 'round de world am 'fected by de gravitation ob de consequences, an' de magnetism dat thermostats de hyperbolical stagnation am contaminated

wif effervescence. Derefoh, most bugs am crazy. Dat's de howcome an' whyfoh ob so many bughouses.

Now den, dere am insects. Insects an' bugs am de same thing 'cept dat insects go in bettah society. Foh instant, aunts am bugs, but I done got some uncles dat am insects. Animals couldn't nevah git 'long wifout insects. Fleas am insects, an' dey is de closest friends at a dog evah had. An' de dogs like dem, too. Did you evah notice how a dog will stop doin' wotevah he am doin' jest to play wif his fleas? Yes, sah. An' he mostest allus plays wif dem wif his hind foot. Dey plays hide-an'-seek. Dey hide an' he seeks dem.

Den us hab house flies, an' hoss flies, an' time flies. But de burglar flea am de worsetest pest us hab. I used one last night. A p'leeceman was chasin' a burglar, an' you oughtah seed dat burglar flee (flea).

But speakin' ob insects an' bugs reminds me dat I can't linger heah too much ob a period ob time. I got a date wif mah gal. An', folks, I got de swellest bug—I mean gal—you evah seed. Mmmmm! Mmmmm! Oh, boy! Oh!!! Dem eyes! Dem lips! Dem nose! Oh, luscious plums!

I been down evah night foh two weeks to see dat gal, but dog-gone if her husband ain't home evah night. If dat man don't die soon I'se gwine look foh anothah gal. Dat man don't treat me right. Fact am, he don't treat me a-tall. Foh instant, last night I jest put mah arm 'round dat gal an' her husband got angerfied. He don't use no sense, nohow. An' when I done try to kiss her he jest gits so disreasonable I gits all out ob impatience.

I says, "Look heah, man. You can't git fresh wif me!"

Den he done de funniest thing. He stahts to run.

I says to mahself, "Wheelbase, if dat fool niggah's gwine run I'se gwine run in de same die-rection." An' I did. An' mebbe you thunk I didn't make dat baby run. Mmmmm! Mmmmm! I bet I run him fo' miles befoh he done ketched me. Den I got him down. I'se some fightah when it comes to fightin'. As I done remahk, I got him down, but dog-gone! Somehow or 'tother I couldn't git him off'n de top ob me. I banged his fist wif mah head, an' smashed his foot 'round

wif mah nose. De way us was goin' I done thunk foh awhile dat I was gwine kill him. Den come to find out dat man had de same notion wot he was gwine do to me. Den I pinched him on de arm, an' you-all knows how dat hurts.

Fin'ly de fight was ovah, an' us shook hands. I shook mine to straighten de bones out, an' he shook his undah mah nose. Besides shakin' hands, mah knees was doin' some shakin', too. Yes, sah, folks, when I shakes I shakes.

Den he invited me to come ovah an' see his wife. He didn't jest inwite me to come ovah. He dared me to.

But speakin' of insects—(*Suddenly looks off stage as if someone had spoken to him from there.*) Huh?—Whose wife?—Mah wife?—Wot she crave?—Tell her I isn't got her ol' rollin' pin. It am right by de front do' whar she allus keeps it. Huh?—(*To audience.*) 'Scuse me, folks. I got to took mah daily dozen—'bout six in each eye. (*Exits.*)

#### CURTAIN.

### HELLO, FOLKS!

#### A MONOLOGUE

Oh, folks, I just seen a awful ax'dent. A big truck run across the foot of Main Street. (*Localize.*)

Things like dat allus makes me nervous. I been dat way all mah life. Nervous an' shaky. When I was just a little baby even I was tur'ble nervous an' shaky. Mah pappy didn't want to see all mah nervousness go to waste so he used to set me by de ash pile with a sieve an' let me sift ashes. By de time I was fifteen yeahs old I was some expert ash sifter. Dere wasn't a stove grate in de country dat had me beat. I was sure some grate. Folks all thunk as how I'd be a grate man. I begun to thunk so, too, dat I was 'bout de greatest thing in town. Den I goes into a store an' seen a nutmeg grater.

Den I found out dat I was a inventor, an' I done quit shakin' ashes. Dat was kind of a shaky business to foller no-how. Yes, sah, I'se invented mo' things den Edison ever thunk of. Right now I'se workin' on a new kind o' airplane

An' I'se bettin' fo' bits when I gits through it am goin' to fly. If it am like all de other things I'se invented it sure 'nough will go up. All de other things I invented done did.

I reckons de greates' thing I ever invented was a parigeon. Know what a parigeon am? Didn't thunk you-all did. I'se de only one what knows what a parigeon am. Here am how it am: I crossed a pigeon an' a parrot. See? Parrot: par, an' pigeon: igeon. Dat makes parigeon. Now den, if de pigeon gits lost de parrot in him kin ax somebody de way home.

Den 'nother thing I invented dat made a hit was a soft rubber rollin' pin. I got dat idea soon's I got married.

Yes, sah, folks, besides all mah other troubles I'se married, too. Marriage am a institution foh de blind. Love am blind, an' when you gits married you goes blindly into it, an' if you isn't blind by dat time yoh ol' woman'll knock yoh eyes out befoh you's married a week. I'se had eye trouble evah since I been married. Mah ol' woman says as how I isn't a good provider. Dog-gone! I provides her all de work she kin do.

Mah! Mah! How marriage do change things. I 'membah when I was co'tin' dat gal. I'd go obah to Octagonal's house—her name am Octagonal. Reckon dey called her dat account she's got 'bout eight sides an' 'evah one am de size of a circus tent. I'd go ovah to Octagonal's house an' us 'ud go out under de moonlight an' set on de ash pile an' dream ob love. Foh hours an' hours I'd set dere an' hold her hands an' dream ob de time dat she'd be mah wife. Mmmmm! Mmmmm! Now I sets foh hours an' hours holdin' her hands so she won't hit me. Yes, sah. An' befoh us was jined in de woolly bonds ob deadlock I'd set dere an' wish an' wish dat I done had a hundered arms to hold dat gal. Now I'se wishin' an wishin' I had 'bout fo' hundered arms jest to hold her dog-gone tongue. De way her tongue done 'nipulates I'se bettin' fo' bits she am gwine burn out de bearin's befoh she am fo'ty years old. Dog-gone if it don't keep floppin' f'um mornin' till night like a loose fendah on a old Ford.

Marriage am all right in a way, but I'se de one dat's allus in de way. I'se gittin' so I can't go to sleep 'less I got a new bump on mah head. De othah night mah wife done went to her sistah's house an' didn't git back, an' I jest couldn't go to

sleep 'til I let de sausage grinder fall on mah head. I'se de head ob de house, an' to show mah undependence I stops evah argerment dat she puts up. Besides argerments I stops evah chair, an' skillet, an' stove leg dat she puts up.

Us got eight chil'ren. Two boys, three gals an' a coupla others. Dey all takes aftah me same as de ol' woman does.

Us lives in a flat. De ol' woman wanted to move in a house but de chil'ren was scared account dey didn't know nothin' 'bout houses. Dey was bawn an' raised in dat flat. De fac' am, dey was flat broke, an'—But far as dat am consarned I been flat broke evah since I said, "I do." Last month de landlord come 'round an' says as how he was gwine to raise our rent. Lawsy! Us was tickled, 'cause us didn't know how us was gwine raise it. De rooms in our flat am so dog-gone small dat us had to tear off de wallpaper to have mo' room. De rooms am so small dat us uses foldin' toothbrushes an' condensed milk. Yes, sah, dem rooms is sure little. You hab to step outside to change yoh mind. I sure feels sorryfied foh dat little dog us got. De rooms am so narrow he has to wag his tail up an' down. An' he wags it so much dat de chil'ren am allus ketchin' cold f'um de draft.

Well, I gotta scoot an' look up some mo' work foh mah wife. It shuah do keep me hustlin'. I nevah seed a fam'ly dat eat so much, an' when dey eats so much I gotta keep workin' mah fool head off findin' ways foh mah wife to make money. A ham down at our place shuah 'nough does last dog-gone quick.

Call 'round some time an' see de chil'ren make some music. Boy, how dey kin play. Ruby plays on de organ. Iodine plays on de saxophone. De ol' woman plays on de washboard. De baby plays on de linoleum, an' I plays dat I injoys it.

Reckon I bettah git 'long home an' help de ol' woman. When I done left home a coupla hours ago she had her tongue ketched in de clothes wringer an' couldn't git loose.

*(Exit or close with song.)*

CURTAIN.



## TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

## A MONOLOGUE

I just escaped from a farm where I was working. I was working for the tightest man you ever saw. This morning he fell in a deep sandpit that was half full of water, and he couldn't get out. His wife ran down to the sandpit and told him to try and stay up until she could ring the dinner bell and call the men in from the fields. "What time is it?" the man asked her. "About ten-thirty," says she. "Well," says the man, "they're getting paid until noon, so don't ring the bell. I'll swim around until they come in to dinner."

You can take it or leave it, but I quit right there at noon. I just can't seem to find a job that satisfies me. Before I got that job on the farm I thought I'd be a stock broker. I was all set for that kind of a job because there wasn't anybody any broker than I was. But I couldn't seem to hit the market just right. When I bought stocks to go up they went down, and when I bought 'em to go down they went up. Then I thought I could fool 'em by buying 'em both ways. I bought some to go up and some to go down. And then the darn things started going sideways. You know in this stock market game there are "bulls" and "bears." Well, they handed me so much "bull" my pocketbook was soon "bare." Right then and there I decided I'd never be able to be a bull or bear. I was too much of a jackass.

No, sir, I just can't seem to find a satisfactory job. Not long ago I thought I'd be an actor. I got a job as leading man in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." But the only leading part I got was leading the bulldogs over the ice. The first night we played I made an awful big hit. The audience called and called for me to come back. Then they dared me to come. When I didn't come they came after me. Right there I took another leading part. I lead the rest of the bunch by a mile. Well, you can take it or leave it, but I quit that job.

There is only one way out of this awful difficulty that I can see, and that is to get married. But every time I hint to some girl that we better get married she starts to hint that that will



be a good time for her to quit her job. And I'd hate to marry a girl that didn't have any ambition. Most of the proverbs are all wrong. Take for instance: "Everything comes to him who waits." Maybe it will if he waits on himself. And then you hear so many people saying that money is a disease. Well, if it is, I must be dog-gone healthy. What I'd like to do is to get a government job. They say it's awfully hard work—until after you get it.

But speaking of getting married reminds me of the last girl I had. She was so beautiful, but, oh, so dumb! I never saw a dumber girl. And old. Oh, my! She was so old that she could remember the Big Dipper when it was nothing but a drinking cup. I took her to a movie one night. The name of the picture was "The Woman Pays," and she thought she had to buy the tickets. The next night I invited her to see "The Birth of a Nation," and she was surprised when I took her to the theatre instead of the hospital. Oh, boy, but she was dumb. While I was going with her there was a bad accident in her family. Her father was mixing up a batch of whatcha-call-it and it exploded and scattered her poor father all over the city. My girl said she was glad for her father's sake because he always did want to be a man about town. He was one of those men that like to spread themselves. The reason I quit going with her was that I discovered that she was unmarried—three times. Her first husband was a very sickly man, and the doctor advised him to go to a warmer climate, so that girl hit him on the head with a hammer. She threatened to shoot her second husband but he jumped on a pair of ice scales and got a weigh. Her third husband tickled the hind foot of a mule and is still at large—still at a large hospital.

Well, I've got to find another job. The kind of a job I want I can't get: Fireman on an airplane. So long. I'm yours till Niagara Falls. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN

## OH, FEET, DON'T LEAVE ME!

An Olio

## CHARACTERS

MR. SMITH, *an inventor. (Whiteface.)*GUMWAD }  
SMOKE } *Two shivering coons.*GUARD *from the cuckoo house. (Whiteface.)*

TWO SUPERNUMARIES.

SCENE: *If possible a woods drop should be used. However, this is not essential.*

(SMITH *enters from L. looking cautiously off R. Then looks back over shoulder to off L. When he reaches C. he motions to off L.*)

SMITH (*in loud stage whisper to off L.*). Come on! The coast is clear!

(SMOKE and GUMWAD *enter lugging a heavy black box between them. They are carrying this by a heavy black strap of leather. They look about them somewhat nervously.*)

SMOKE. Ah doan—

SMITH (*puts finger to lips for silence*). Sh! Sh! Sh!

SMOKE. Sounds like a tire leakin'

SMITH (*a bit angered*). Sh!

SMOKE. Ah doan like dis--

SMITH. Sh! Set the box down very, very carefully.

(*They deposit box very carefully on floor.*)

GUMWAD. Nevah busted a bottle.

SMITH. Sh!

SMOKE. Ah doan like dis heah "Sh!" "Sh!" bizness. Dere am somethin' too dog-gone spookyfied 'bout it.

SMITH (*looking off*). I think everything is all right now. I thought at first that we were being followed.

GUMWAD. Boss, you done acts like dis heah box am full ob gin or somethin'.

SMOKE. If Ah was full ob gin Ah wouldn't feel so shivery.

SMITH. That box contains a well-guarded secret, boys. But now that we are way out here in the country I'll let you in on it. I have always contended that when a person dies he returns and—

SMOKE (*looking quickly around nervously*). O-O!

SMITH. As I was saying, he returns and lurks around the place where he drew his last breath.

GUMWAD. Mmmm! Mmmm! De way Ah's beginnin' to feel right now dis heah am de place dat Ah's gwine lurk.

SMITH. With the machine in that box I am going to prove that I am right or wrong. I am going to find out if there are any dead people walking around here.

SMOKE (*starts off*). Ah got a pow'ful 'portant engagement.

GUMWAD (*following him*). Me, too!

SMITH. Just a minute, boys. (*They stop reluctantly.*) Come here and I'll explain more fully. (*They return to C.*) There is really nothing to be afraid of.

GUMWAD AND SMOKE (*in unison*). Oh, no!

SMITH. These people that I am looking for do not return in the flesh.

SMOKE. If Ah keeps on a-shakin' Ah isn't gwine hab no flesh, eithah. De calves ob mah legs am shook way down to mah ankles now.

SMITH. With this machine I can simply detect electric waves that will denote the presence of human souls.

GUMWAD. Uh-huh, an' Ah's gwine run so dog-gone fast dat you's gwine see mah *soles* so much dat you's gwine thunk Ah's kneelin' down. (*Starts off.*)

SMITH. Now, Gumwad, be reasonable. Come here. (GUMWAD *returns.*) Do you think I would have asked you to come along if I had thought there was any danger? Of course not. And don't forget, if you two boys stay with me until I have completed my test I will give each one a hundred dollars.

SMOKE. Dat sure 'nough am a heap ob jack. (*Shivers.*) But doan gib it to me now else it am gwine jump right out'n mah pocket.

SMITH. Remove the lid from the box and we will proceed at once. (*They fumble nervously with strap.*) Keep cool, boys, keep cool.

GUMWAD. Cool? Dog-gone, man, Ah got icicles on mah spine.

SMOKE. Dey isn't nothin' in dis heah box dat'll blow our heads off, is dey?

SMITH. Why, of course not. It is nothing but a very, very sensitive electrical machine.

SMOKE. If it am as sensitive as mah nerves, man, you got somethin'. (*They remove lid and gaze in box.*)

GUMWAD. An' you's gwine fish for spooks wif dat thing?

SMITH. That was my intention. It is first necessary to throw on the switch. (*Reaches inside box.*)

(*Sound of cow mooing in distance. GUMWAD and SMOKE fall into each others arms very much frightened.*)

BOTH. Oh, Lawsy!!

SMITH. Come out of it! That was nothing but a cow.

SMOKE (*as he and GUMWAD release each other*). A—A dead cow?

SMITH. Why, no. Some farmer's cow, I suppose. (*Looks off R.*) See? Way over there in that field. There's your cow. (*Stops short.*) Well, can you beat that? I believe that is a little cemetery not more than a hundred feet away.

(SMOKE and GUMWAD embrace each other wildly as before.)

BOTH. Oh, Lawsy!!

SMITH. Come on now. Don't be foolish. Did a cemetery ever hurt either one of you? Remember those on the outside don't want to get in, and those on the inside can't get out.

(GUMWAD and SMOKE disengage themselves.)

GUMWAD. BOSS, you doan know what's gwine happen when you turns dat thing on.

SMITH. There is only one way to find out.

SMOKE (*confidentially*). Mistah Smith, Ah can't jest comperhen' howcome you-all can't 'nipulate dat thing wifout me hangin' 'round. Ah shuah 'nough does got a 'portant engagement right now a long, long ways f'um heah. An' if Ah goes 'long at de speed dat mah feets am hankerin' to go Ah's gwine be at dat place in nothin' flat. \*

SMITH (*pulls large revolver from pocket*). Now listen to me. I'm tired of your foolishness. There is nothing to be afraid of. Absolutely nothing. I've come way out here to give this machine a thorough testing. I can't do it alone. Now I don't intend to have you men desert me at this time. I don't want to be rough, but if either one of you attempt to leave me I'll blow your fool heads off.

SMOKE (*forces a grin*). Golly, boss, can't you-all took a joke? Ah was jest foolin'.

SMITH. Perhaps you were, but I'm not. (*Pockets revolver.*) In order that you will understand more fully why I came way out here I'll explain in a brief way the reason. A good many years ago a number of Indians lay in ambush here ready to massacre some whites who were traveling overland. As the Indians were about to leap out upon the unsuspecting palefaces a miracle occurred. There was a flash of lightning and every Indian dropped dead.

GUMWAD. Right heah?

SMITH. Right here.

SMOKE. Right whar us am standin'?

SMITH. We are on the exact spot.

SMOKE (*starts off*). Dey isn't no use bein' too exact.

GUMWAD (*follows SMOKE*). Smoke, you shuah does talk contagious things.

SMITH (*wields revolvers*). You had better come back. (*They reluctantly return.*)

(SMOKE and GUMWAD are between two fires. They are afraid to stay and afraid to leave. They finally return to C.)

SMOKE. Ah wondahs ef mah ol' woman'll git married ag'in ef Ah doan come back?

SMITH. Come on now and cut out this nonsense. We aren't getting anywhere.

GUMWAD. Ah would ef you'd let me. An' Ah'd git there fast.

SMITH. Now let me see. It will be better if we scatter out a bit—

SMOKE. *Dem's de words!* Watch me scattah. (*Starts off.*)

SMITH. No, no! There must be some system to the scattering. Now, Gumwad, you stand over there. (*Points L.* GUMWAD obeys.) And, Smoke, you go that way. (*Points R.*) It might be best if you stand about in the center of that graveyard.

SMOKE (*opens eyes in terror*). In de center ob dat gravy-yard? Let Gumwad do it. He am half dead now.

GUMWAD. Boy, when folks stop talkin' an' walkin' an' breathin' Ah isn't standin' in de center ob dem. No, sah!

SMITH. Oh, well. There is no use in making you have nervous prostration. (SMITH pulls some short pieces of rope from his pocket.) As I said before, we will only get electrical waves on the machine if the souls of the departed Indians are present. But one can never tell. If you boys should happen to see an Indian in the flesh I want you to capture him. Grab him and bind him with these ropes. Now

get ready. (*Hands each shivering coon a rope.*) Are you all ready?

SMOKE. Ah's a'ready to run.

SMITH. If you do I'll shoot you full of holes, Smoke.

GUMWAD. Hole-y Smoke!

SMOKE. Gumwad, ef us does us am dead. Ef us don't us am de same way.

SMITH. Now look out. I'm going to throw the switch.

GUMWAD. Ef you does Ah'll throw a fit.

SMITH. Are you ready?

SMOKE. To die?

SMITH. When you hear a musical note you will know that I have thrown the switch. (*Reaches down in box and rings cowbell. Immediately there is a chorus of Indian war whoops off stage. GUMWAD and SMOKE become so excited they try to tie their ropes around each other's necks. SMITH looks at them surprised as if he did not hear anything unusual. Whoops off stage cease. GUMWAD and SMOKE stand blinking their eyes as they shiver with fright.*) What's the matter with you boys?

BOTH (*together*). Injuns!

SMITH. You don't mean to say that you saw some redskins?

SMOKE. If dey wasn't redskins dey was dog-gone noisy banana skins.

SMITH. I didn't hear a thing.

GUMWAD. Mmmm! Mmmm! Smoke, no wondah it were so loud. What three ob us was s'posed to heah only two ob us heahed. Shot or no shot Ah's on mah way! (*He and SMOKE start off L. and reach exit when they are greeted with Indian whoops directly off L. They fall back, staggering to C.*)

SMOKE (*starting towards R.*). Dis way, Gumwad. (*When they reach R. exit they are greeted with more whoops from that side.*) Oh, Lawsy!



SMITH (*looks at them surprised*). What is the matter? I wish you'd be quiet. I can't give this machine a satisfactory test with all your jumping around.

GUMWAD (*looks off nervously*) Us isn't de only ones what's jumpin' round.

SMITH. Now I'm going to adjust these rheostats and try again.

SMOKE. Foh goodness sake, doan try it no mo'!

(SMITH sticks his head down in box and is unaware of what takes place for a moment or so.)

(SMOKE nudges GUMWAD and motions that they will sneak off L. They tiptoe to L. An Indian steps out from L., stops and stands silently in front of them. The Indian is simply a man with a colored blanket wrapped around him, and pulled up high enough to hide the face. On the head is a soft felt hat stuck full of turkey or chicken feathers. GUMWAD and SMOKE are too frightened to run. They fall into each others' arms and hide their faces. Unseen by them the Indian silently exits. They finally work up sufficient courage to look, and are dumbfounded to find no Indian. SMOKE pantomimes that they cross and exeunt R. They are about half across when a man with a white sheet over his head enters and stops. The legs of GUMWAD and SMOKE give way and they fall to floor where they hide their faces like two ostriches might do in the sand. Ghost silently exits R.)

SMITH (*stands and shakes his head when he finds he is unable to make the machine function. Then notices the kneeling coons and speaks sharply.*) Hey!

SMOKE AND GUMWAD (*wildly*). Oh! (*Try to push their faces deeper to hide those awful things they have been seeing.*)

(GUARD enters from L.)

GUARD. Listen here, Smith. What do you mean running away from home? I've been chasing you all afternoon. (GUMWAD and SMOKE look up and GUARD notices them.) Who are you fellows?

SMOKE. A—A—Angels, boss, waitin' foh our wings!

GUMWAD. He am wrong, boss. Whar Ah was dere ain't no angels. (*They stand.*)

GUARD (*gruffly*). What do you men mean by leading this boy astray? (*Meaning SMITH.*)

SMOKE. Man, us tried to lead him a race, but he shoved out a dog-gone pop-gun.

GUARD. Don't you know he's an escaped inmate of the cuckoo house?

SMOKE AND GUMWAD. O-O!

GUARD (*to SMITH*). Come on, now. The Superintendent has been looking all over for his radio, and here you have it in that box. (*Picks up radio.*) Have you still got your toy gun? (*SMITH shakes head in affirmative and shows revolver.*) Then come on. (*GUARD exits L. followed by SMITH.*)

(*SMOKE ties his rope around his head.*)

GUMWAD. What's dat foh?

SMOKE. You bettah do de same thing. Tie yoh fool brains up befoh you loses any mo'. 'Magine us'ns comin' way out heah wif a nut.

GUMWAD. But dem Injuns?

SMOKE. 'Lucinations, boy. 'Lucinations.

GUMWAD. Ah kin done tell you one thing, Smoke. Befoh Ah sees no mo' ob dem said 'lucinations Ah's gwine jine de church right smaht an' speedy.

SMOKE. Me, too, boy; me, too. What church you gwine jine?

GUMWAD. All ob dem includin' de Salvation Army, de Red Cross, de Boy Scouts— (*They exeunt arm in arm L.*)

## SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE

## CHARACTERS

SERGEANT THORPE, *the recruiting officer.*

SAM PADDLEFOOT, *with a desire to join the army.*

PLACE: *In the recruiting office.*

SCENE: *A make-shift recruiting office. Rough table type desk with a chair back of it. Table is littered with papers.*

*(When the curtain rises SERGEANT is seated in chair back of desk looking over some papers as he puffs vigorously on a big cigar.)*

*(SAM, with half frightened look, enters rather cautiously as if he were ready to run right out again. SERGEANT apparently does not see him.)*

SAM *(rather weakly)*. Good mawnin'. *(SERGEANT does not look up. SAM speaks a bit louder.)* Good mawnin'. *(SERGEANT ignores him. SAM edges nearer desk and speaks louder.)* Good mawnin'!

SERGEANT *(looks up quickly and bawls out)*. Good morning! *(SAM nearly faints from fright.)* What d'ye want?

SAM. Ah—Ah—wants 'o 'list.

SERGEANT. A list of what?

SAM. Ah—Ah craves to—to jine de army.

SERGEANT. Oh, I see. You want to enlist?

SAM. Yes, sah. Ah wants to jine de army.

SERGEANT. What for?

SAM. Jest 'cause.

SERGEANT. Just want to be a soldier and win some medals, eh?

SAM. No, sah. Ah don't want no medals. Ah isn't no meddlesome man a-tall.

SERGEANT. Have you ever had any previous army experience?

SAM. No, sah. But I'se been married once an' shot at fo' times.

SERGEANT. Then you know what it means to hear the whiz of flying bullets.

SAM. Yes, sah. Ah's heard dem eight times.

SERGEANT. Now, now. You just said you had been shot at four times.

SAM. Yes, sah.

SERGEANT. Now you turn right around and say you have heard the whiz of bullets eight times.

SAM. Yes, sah.

SERGEANT. Well? How do you account for that?

SAM. Boss, Ah done heard dem bullets when dey whizzed past me, an' den Ah heard dem ag'in when Ah whizzed past de bullets.

SERGEANT. You don't mean to say that you ran?

SAM. Man, Ah say Ah run. If Ah'd had a coupla feathers in mah hands Ah'd o' flew.

SERGEANT. We do not want such men in the army. Nobody but cowards run.

SAM. Jest same, Ah isn't got no time foh dem reciprocity bullets.

SERGEANT. That's a new one. What are reciprocity bullets?

SAM. De kind dat stops you if you-all stops dem.

SERGEANT. What branch of the service did you have in mind joining?

SAM. Wot which?

SERGEANT. Branch! Branch! What branch did you have in mind?

SAM. Ah isn't got no branch in mind. Ah isn't hankerin' on fightin' in a tree, nohow.

SERGEANT. No, no! Would you want to join the infantry and walk all day?

SAM. Mmmm! Mmmm! Dat don't listen so grandorious, does it?

SERGEANT. Would you want to join the aviation and fly all day?

SAM. An' dat listens wuss.

SERGEANT. What's the matter? Are you afraid to go up in the air?

SAM. 'Tain't de goin' up. It am de comin' down dat worryfies me.

SERGEANT. Well, then, perhaps you'd like to join the cavalry and ride all day.

SAM. No, sah. Ah don't craves to ride no hoss. When de bugle sounds retreat Ah don't want no hoss on mah hands to bother me.

SERGEANT. Well, now, let me see. Perhaps you would prefer the coast artillery.

SAM. Dat's de baby! Put me in de coast artil'ry an' Ah'll go coastin' all day.

SERGEANT. What is your name?

SAM. Sam.

SERGEANT. Your full name?

SAM. It am de same as when Ah's sober.

SERGEANT. Your name is Sam what?

SAM. No, sah, 'tain't Sam Wott.

SERGEANT. Listen here. You have more than one name, don't you?

SAM. Oh, sure. You wants mah maiden name?

SERGEANT. Whatever it is, I want it.

SAM. Sam Paddlefoot.

SERGEANT (*writes*). How old are you?

SAM. Ah jest don't perzactly know. But Ah was bawn in June so you-all kin figure it out foh yohself.

SERGEANT. What's the matter? Don't you know the date of your birth?

SAM. Fo'teen ninety-two.

SERGEANT. Say, who do you think you are? Columbus?

SAM. Dog-gone, it were fo'teen ninety-two.

SERGEANT. Why, boy, that would make you five hundred years old.

SAM. Mmmm! Mmmm! Ah knows Ah isn't dat old.

SERGEANT. Then you weren't born in the year fourteen ninety-two.

SAM. Not de year. Dat was de numbah on de house.

SERGEANT. You said you had been married, didn't you?

SAM. Yes, sah.

SERGEANT. Where is your wife.

SAM. Home.

SERGEANT. But why are you leaving a wife to join the army?

SAM. Boss, dat woman done said somethin' to me dat injured mah feelin's beyond repair. Dat's howcome Ah's navi-gatin' out'n de precinct.

SERGEANT. Would you mind telling me what she said that hurt your feelings so badly?

SAM. She done say, "Sam-u-el Paddlefoot, you done scoot out'n dis house! An' if you-all evah comes back heah once mo' Ah'll hit you so hard dat you's gwine leave a vacuum hole in de atmosphere ten miles long." Dat's howcome.

SERGEANT. Well, now. Have you any children?

SAM. No, sah, us isn't got no chil'ren 'cept two houn' dogs an' a cat.

SERGEANT. Do you fully realize what you are up against if you join the army?

SAM. No, sah. But Ah knows what Ah's up against if Ah stick 'round mah wife.

SERGEANT. You may be in the army only a month and get shot in a fracas.

SAM. How close am dat to de liver?

SERGEANT. You might march proudly into battle bearing your country's colors and then, a screaming shell will bear down upon you and your right hand is shot away.

SAM. Huh?

SERGEANT. But you do not care.

SAM. Don't Ah? Ah don't care if mah hand am shot off?

SERGEANT. Of course not. You are a brave soldier. You shift the bright waving banner to the other hand and go on. But, ah! Another shell is coming towards you! (*Sam dodges.*) It tears away your other hand.

SAM. Huh? Wot am it? A second-hand shot?

SERGEANT. But you do not mind.

SAM. Isn't Ah got no feelin'?

SERGEANT. No. You are a brave soldier. You grasp the flag's staff in your teeth—

SAM. Oh, lawsy! Heah goes mah teeth!

SERGEANT. And you press forward.

SAM. Ah'd ruther press pants.

SERGEANT. Another shell is coming!

SAM (*faces audience shivering*). Yep, heah goes mah teeth!

SERGEANT. Another shell is coming!

SAM. Well, foh de Lawd's sake, shut dat window?

SERGEANT. And your head is shot off.

SAM. Huh?

SERGEANT. You've lost your head.

SAM. Man, if you-all had two hands shot off an' was holdin' a flag in yoh mouth an' a shell was comin' to knock yoh teeth out you'd lose yoh head, too.

SERGEANT. But you do not care.

SAM. Why should Ah care? Mah head's done gone. Wot Ah's wonderin' am how is Ah gwine hold de flag?

SERGEANT. The battle is over.

SAM. Uh-huh. Ovah 'bout fo' minutes too late.

SERGEANT. The General has heard of your bravery. He calls you to headquarters.

SAM. To git a new head? Man, if Ah'd o' been doin' wot mah feets wanted to do Ah'd be headed foh de hind-quarters.

SERGEANT. The General has sent for you. You brush your clothes and shave—

SAM. Wot does Ah shave?

SERGEANT. You shave your face.

SAM. How? De last Ah seed ob it it were on mah head an' mah head am done gone.

SERGEANT. All right, then. We'll say that last shell didn't take your head off. As I said, you shave—

SAM. Ah don't need no shave. Ah done hab a close shave f'um dat last shell. Listen, you-all isn't got somethin' else in de army Ah could do wifout stoppin' all dem shells, is you?

SERGEANT. I see you have no use for a shell.

SAM. Boss, de way dey acts dey shouldn't hab no "s" on de front.

SERGEANT. Are you ready to sign on the dotted line?

SAM. Can't sign nothin'. Got bofe mah hands shot off.

SERGEANT. Well, you can't join the army unless you sign this paper.



SAM (*starts to leave*). Ah's on mah way.

SERGEANT. Have you changed your mind about joining the army?

SAM. Yes, sah, Ah is. Reckons Ah'll join a No'th Pole expectiction. Dey isn't no shells up dere 'cept clam shells.

SERGEANT. You're a coward!

SAM. Uh-huh. Go 'head an' call me all dem names. But ef Ah had mah hands back you'd nevah dare say it. Ah's gwine back home.

SERGEANT. To your wife?

SAM. Mebbe Ah kin git her to jine yoh dog-gone army. An' if she do happen to come down heah please git dem shells flyin' 'round her ol' head. (*Exits. SERGEANT laughs heartily.*)

CURTAIN

## TROUBLE, ALMOST

### CHARACTERS

GUMWAD BUNK	} <i>Two dark rivals.</i>
CARBONA INK	

CARBONA. Look heah, Gumwad Bunk; is you is, or is you ain't?

GUMWAD. Is I is, or is I ain't which?

CARBONA. Is you is, or is you ain't gwine stop follerin' me 'round?

GUMWAD. Who's follerin' you 'round?

CARBONA. You is.

GUMWAD. Man, you's got 'lucinations. Jest 'cause yoh die-rections am mah die-rections ain't no stipulation ob de habeas corpse dat I'se follerin' you, am it?

CARBONA. Yoh face am doin' a heap ob quiverin' but you isn't sayin' much. Wot foh you gwine down dis way, nohow?

GUMWAD. De personification ob yoh question am laminated wif contamination ob de lassitude—

CARBONA. Hold evahthing, big boy! Hold evahthing! You's gwine git compound factory ob de jawbone tryin' to immunize sech big words. Words sech as dem is like am foh edjamacated folks an' nobody else but.

GUMWAD. Stop yoh alludin', Carbona. I'se edgamacated.

CARBONA. You's edgamacated? Gumwad, dey had to burn down de school house to git you out'n de fust reader.

GUMWAD. Am dat a certainly?

CARBONA. It shuah 'nough am. You nevah did git 'way from de foot ob de class.

GUMWAD. Cose I didn't. De foot ob de class was de place I mostest craved.

CARBONA. How come you crave de foot ob de class?

GUMWAD. 'Cause dat's whar de stove was. Wasn't I some 'rithmatticker, though?

CARBONA. Yass, you was! You couldn't eben mulsify two an' two.

GUMWAD. I'se talkin' 'bout addin'. 'Membah how de teacher 'ud put numbahs on top ob each othah 'til dey was ten feet high? An' how fast I'd run up dat row ob numbahs?

CARBONA. G'wan! You couldn't run up a row ob turnips wifout breakin' yoh leg. How 'bout de time she done ax you whar de Dead Sea was?

GUMWAD. Wot 'bout it?

CARBONA. An' you done say you didn't eben know 'twas sick. An' 'membah de time she done ax you which way de Mississloppi Rivah run?

GUMWAD. Wot 'bout it?

CARBONA. An' you say it run down. An' 'membah de time she done ax you whar de equator was?

GUMWAD. Wot 'bout it?

CARBONA. An' you say you looked all ovah town an' couldn't find it. Dog-gone! Gumwad, if brains was money you wouldn't hab enough to buy a cockroach its breakfast.

GUMWAD. I wouldn't ef you was de cockroach.

CARBONA. Is you 'sinuatin' dat I eats lots?

GUMWAD. Mmmm! Mmmm! If you-all didn't move 'round so much you'd make a good warehouse. You eats so much you got flat feet totin' it 'round.

CARBONA. Boy, you's gwine keep on spoutin' dat watah-melon tunnel ob yoh's 'til I loses mah impatience. An' den—

GUMWAD. Den wot?

CARBONA. Jest den, dat's all. But don't aggrivate me. Don't aggrivate me. Mmmm! Mmmm! When I'se aggrivated—Brrrrr!

GUMWAD. Lawsy! You shuah 'nough does sound ferrokus.

CARBONA. I shuah is ferrokus when I'se aggrivated. An' I'se gitting' mo' an' mo' aggrivated all 'long. Dere ain't no tellin'. I'se jest liable to push mah fist righ flop in yoh eye.

GUMWAD. Uh-huh. An' when yoh fist am in mah eye I'se jest liable to shut mah eyelid an' bust yoh wrist. I'se purty tough mahself.

CARBONA. Boy, you isn't tough. You's jest brittle.

GUMWAD. Yes, sah, I'se tough. Reckon you-all don't know dat I hab to quit tookin' baths account I scratches all de enamel off'n de bathtub. How's dat foh tough?

CARBONA. Gumwad, you's jest a infant 'longside me. Why, I shampoos mah head wif razor blades an' busted pop bottles. An' when I tooks a bath I uses a handful ob carpet tacks foh soap.

GUMWAD. Huh! Does you know dat when I winks mah eye folks done thunk de wind am slammin' a do' shut?

CARBONA. You isn't gwine hab no eyes to wink if you-all don't cease follerin' me 'round.

GUMWAD. I isn't follerin' you 'round. I'se on mah way down to Phelia's house.

CARBONA. Huh? You's gwine down to see Phelia?

GUMWAD. Nothin' else but, an' I isn't meanin' howevah.

CARBONA. You isn't gwine down to see Phelia dis night.

GUMWAD. Howcome I isn't?

CARBONA. I'se all dated up wif her mahself.

GUMWAD. Carbona Ink, you done got a body squeak. Phelia tell me inspicketly dat I'se 'scortin' her to de High-shine ball tonight.

CARBONA. You go navigatin' down to her house you's gwine be de honor guest at a funeral.

GUMWAD. G'wan, black boy. I wouldn't be seed at yoh funeral.

CARBONA. I isn't 'lucidatin' 'bout mah funeral a-tall. You's de fool coon dat's flirtin' wif de undertaker.

GUMWAD. Is you tryin' to flustrate me? Don't do it.

CARBONA. Wot you does if I does?

GUMWAD. You done flusterate me I'll hit you so hard—

CARBONA. Perceed. Jest how hard?

GUMWAD. I'll done hit you so hard dat when you hits de sidewalk you isn't eben gwine bounce. You's gwine right through.

CARBONA. O-O! Why, boy, you starts anythin' like dat I'll knock you so far dat you'll hab to work yoh way back on a freight boat. When I hits a man he shuah do 'membah it.

GUMWAD. Uh-huh. An' when I hits a man he don't 'membah nothin' a-tall. I shuah is pow'ful sorryfied to leave you, but I'se on mah way.

CARBONA. Jest a minute, Gumwad. Dere ain't no use ob you gittin' homicided, an' dat's jest wot's gwine happen if you-all goes down to Phelia's house.

GUMWAD. Well, dog-gone, man, I'se gwine marry dat gal. Reckon I—

CARBONA. You's gwine marry her? Does she know it?

GUMWAD. Cose she knows it. She am de one wot told me.

CARBONA. Why, I'se all engaged to wed up wif Phelia mahself. Done made all de disarrangements last night.

GUMWAD. You's crazy. I was wif Phelia last night.

CARBONA. Listen heah, Gumwad. One ob us am shuah crazy, an' I knows dog-gone well dat mah mind am clear.

GUMWAD. Yeah; clear as mud. Us done set on her pappy's new daviepo't last night, an'—

CARBONA. Dey isn't got no new daviepo't. Dey's still got de sofa her brothah done buy—

GUMWAD. Phelia isn't got no brothah. Phelia Snowflake am de only child—

CARBONA. Who de debbil's makin' talk 'bout a snowflake? I's courtin' Phelia Nightshade an'—

GUMWAD. Carbona, len' me fo' bits an' I'll buy bofe ob us a han samwich.

CARBONA. Shuah 'nough. An' p'raps us kin hab a double weddin' an' 'twon't cost so much foh a parson. (*They exit arm in arm, or close with a comic duet number.*)

## ON YOH WAY, MUSKRAT!

## An Olio

MUSKRAT JIMSONWEED, *who was recently married.*

ROSEBUD JIMSONWEED, *the one whom he married.*

MUSKRAT *is small, rather meek, nervous man.*

ROSEBUD *is a large, lumbering woman. This part should be played by a man.*

(ROSEBUD stomps on. When she reaches C. she turns and calls angrily to off stage.)

ROSEBUD. Muskrat, ef you-all doan put some speed in dem dogs ob yohs Ah's gwine git ahind you an' put speed whar it'll do de mostes' good.

MUSKRAT (*from off stage in high-pitched voice*). Ah's comin'.

ROSEBUD. So am de Jedgment Day but you isn't nevar gwine git dere in time to see it.

(MUSKRAT enters.)

MUSKRAT. What's all de rush? Dey isn't no fire ahead, an' dere isn't no speed cops ahind.

ROSEBUD. Shet yoh face, an' ramble. Ah's takin' you down to git you dat job befoh some othah lazy niggah gits it.

MUSKRAT. Ah isn't lazy.

ROSEBUD. No, you isn't lazy. You isn't done did a lick ob work since us was married fo' weeks ago.

MUSKRAT. Dat ain't long. Ah's figgahin' us am still on our honeymoon.

ROSEBUD. You jest staht figgahin 'how us am gwine eat an' forgit de honeymoon.

MUSKRAT. Dog-gone, woman, doan all de books say dat new married folks live on love an' kisses?

ROSEBUD. Uh-huh, de books done say it, but love an' kisses doan stick to mah ribs like po'k chops an' 'taters. Now you done git 'long an' git dat job.

MUSKRAT. What Ah knows 'bout dat job?

ROSEBUD. Can't you learn?

MUSKRAT. Learn to feed lions? Jest 'bout as easy as learnin' to polish alligators' teeth.

ROSEBUD. Listen heah, you dog-gone cowyard. De ad done say dey wants a man to sort ob help 'round de animal cages in de park. Doan said nothin' 'bout feedin' de animals. Jest sort ob clean up de cages an' mebbe wash de elephants an' sech.

MUSKRAT. Woman, did you evah wash a elephant? You doan kotch dis niggah washin' no elephants. No, sah!

ROSEBUD. Listen heah, shrimp. If you-all doan git dat job Ah's gwine knock yoh ol' head 'round so fah dat you's gwine be lookin' straight ahead when you's walkin' backwards.

MUSKRAT. But, Rosebud—

ROSEBUD. When Ah done wed up wif you you done promise to love, honah, an' obey—

MUSKRAT. But Ah didn't said nothin' 'bout washin' elephants.

ROSEBUD. You's comin' to de bridges befoh you crosses dem. Mebbe dey's got some othah niggah to wash de elephants. Mebbe all you hab to do am curry de lions.

MUSKRAT. An' pick sandburrs out'n dere tails. Not me!

ROSEBUD. Boy, you isn't skeered ob a lion's tail is you? Dat ain't de end what am dang'rous.

MUSKRAT. Mebbe not, but a lion shuah 'nough got good hinges in de middle. Mebbe Ah bettah look 'round some othah places foh a job.

ROSEBUD. Dat's what you been sayin' foh two weeks, an' Ah's sick an' tired ob heahin' it. Ah's dee-cided dat you takes dis said job, an' you takes said job.

MUSKRAT (*shivers*). Wash elephants an' curry lions! An' me wif heart trouble.

ROSEBUD. Who's got heart trouble?

MUSKRAT. Mah goodness, Rosebud, did you-all know dat Ah's got a pow'ful bad heart?

ROSEBUD. You's gwine hab a pow'ful bad eye if you doan git dat job. 'Magine you wif heart trouble.

MUSKRAT. Ah reckon Ah nevah tol' you 'bout mah heart.

ROSEBUD. What am de simpletoms?

MUSKRAT. De doctah done say dat one ob mah heart's ventriliquisms am dislocated.

ROSEBUD. He weren't talkin' 'bout yoh heart. He was talkin' 'bout yoh head.

MUSKRAT. Dere ain't nothin' mattah wif mah head.

ROSEBUD (*doubles fist meaningly*). Not yet, but—

MUSKRAT. Listen, Rosebud. Ah got a idea.

ROSEBUD. You got a what?

MUSKRAT. Ah got a idea.

ROSEBUD. Man, whar you got it?

MUSKRAT. In mah head. Whar you s'pects Ah got it?

ROSEBUD. G'wan, niggah. You isn't got nothin' in dat head 'cept cobwebs. Dat's de howcome Ah's marchin' you down aftah dat job. Now, scoot!

MUSKRAT. Jes' a minute. How much jack us got in de bank?

ROSEBUD. Man, de only thing us got in de bank am our signatures.

MUSKRAT. How much jack us got to home?

ROSEBUD. Fo' dollahs an' seben cents all told.



MUSKRAT. All told am bettah den all gone. Now mah idea were dat foh one dollah us gits a washtub—

ROSEBUD. What you gittin' at?

MUSKRAT. An' foh one dollah us gits a washboard.

ROSEBUD. Muskrat, you's talkin' yohself right flop into de hospital.

MUSKRAT. An' foh anothah dollah us gits some soap—

ROSEBUD. An' wif de las' dollah you bettah git some lin'-ment, an' some bandages, an'—

MUSKRAT. An' den Ah'll ramble 'round an' git you some wash to do foh de neighbahs.

ROSEBUD (*grasps him by collar and whirls him around*). Muskrat, is yo' 'sinuatin' dat Ah's gwine be a wash-woman?

MUSKRAT. Wait a minute! Ah's countin' on helpin'.

ROSEBUD. Ah got a movin' pitcher ob you helpin'. What you countin' on doin' when you helps?

MUSKRAT. Ah was thunkin' dat Ah could keep de sparrows off'n de clothes-line.

ROSEBUD (*pushes him roughly forward*). You's gwine down an' push some sparrows off'n dem tigahs an' leopards an'—

MUSKRAT (*struggling*). But honey, Ah—

ROSEBUD (*still pushing him*). Doan honey me. Ah isn't no beehive.

(*They stop suddenly when a loud voice off stage calling papers interrupts them.*)

VOICE. Extra! Extra! Lion eats trainer!

MUSKRAT. O-O! (*Faints and makes a comedy fall.*)

ROSEBUD (*grasps him by collar and drags him off.*) No dangah now. De lion am full.

## RICKETY-RACKETY RHYMES

### AND THE BATTLE WAS ON

He promised to buy her a sealskin wrap;  
She promised to darn his socks.  
And the argument that followed  
Nearly set them on the rocks.  
"Take a look at that sock!" he bellowed;  
"There's a hole as big as a barn!"  
She snapped right back, "If you don't give a *wrap*,  
Then I don't give a *darn*!"

\* \* \* \*

### BLIND LOVE

Mary has a new boy friend,  
An artist who sure knows his trade.  
As soon as he comes to see Mary  
That artist draws the shade.

\* \* \* \*

### SOMETHING WRONG

I stood on the bridge at midnight,  
Eating a fur-lined bun.  
Two moons rose over the city  
Where there should have been but one.

\* \* \* \*

### OUT OF THE PAST

Out of the past  
Into the present;  
Let the future take care of itself.  
I found it way back in the cellar  
Behind some junk on the shelf.  
Out of the past  
Into the present;  
The future holds not enough pelf  
To get it from me; my friends will all beller,  
But I'm going to drink it myself.

Early to bed and early to rise  
Every time the baby cries.

\* \* \* \*

The sun shines east,  
The sun shines west;  
But I can't get this gravy  
Off'n my vest.

\* \* \* \*

A simple little question,  
And now he's up for life.  
Oh, yes, he's up against it,  
For she became his wife.

\* \* \* \*

### SOW SO

Where the neighbors' dogs and chickens  
Congregate to raise the dickens,  
Where the neighbors' children love to romp and play;  
Where the weeds are so persistent,  
Inconsistent, but insistent;  
Where the tomcats meet for their nocturnal fray;

That's the place I've raked and spaded,  
Smoothed and harrowed, and brocaded  
With garden seeds of many different brands.  
Unlike reapings of my neighbors,  
What I get from all my labors  
Are some callouses and blisters on my hands.

\* \* \* \*

### WHAT'S THE IDEA?

There's something I can't figure out;  
Perhaps somebody will tell me about  
The inconsistency of it all,  
And get me out of this awful stall.

Now scientists claim, and it really cheers,  
 That the sun will last 15,000,000,000 years.  
 Then why all the worry, and raving, and slaving,  
 For putting through bills for daylight saving?

\* \* \* \*

One time I thought I'd look up our family tree;  
 I knew a lot of the twigs were dead.  
 But as I gazed up into our family tree  
 A cocoanut fell on my head.

\* \* \* \*

### VANISHING AMERICA

Gone is the Old Oaken Bucket;  
 The Little Red School House, too.  
 The One-Horse Shay has vanished,  
 The Hitching Post is taboo.  
 The Old Town Pump is no longer,  
 Sleigh Bells tingle no more;  
 One never hears Suffragette Speeches,  
 Or "Skinny, Gimme the Core!"  
 And where is the Forest Primeval?  
 Has it gone with the Wild, Woolly West?  
 And the Trolley Car Ride for a Nickel,  
 And the man in the Crazy Quilt Vest?

But one thing has not been discarded  
 Or cut out by Father Time's shears:  
 The *boy* who never likes *washing*  
 The *back* of his neck and his ears.

\* \* \* \*

My wife made me a pound cake  
 To please my palate.  
 I put a handle in it;  
 It makes a dandy mallet.

## A BRAVE ON BROADWAY

Down the main stem of the city,  
Down the brilliant lighted highway,  
Where the flaring, glaring flashers  
On the store fronts make the faces  
Of the passers-by look pasty.  
Down the street where clatter, clangy  
Motor buses, double-deckers,  
Vie with pleasure cars so handsome,  
Chugging, plugging second-handed  
Flivvers with their sirens squawking.  
Down the avenue of action,  
Where so much is artificial,  
'Mid the bobbing, throbbing masses,  
Struts our hero, Harold DeFluffy.  
As he struts with self-assurance  
Through the wreathing seething, weaving,  
Densely populated highway,  
He is quite aware that women—  
Plain attired, classy women—  
Cast their glances so appraising  
On this sheik so neat and nifty,  
In his hand-me-down and gaiters,  
Swinging walking stick so slender,  
And a cigarette that's hanging  
From his carmen-tinted two lips.  
That, my young bucks, is a picture  
Of the young brave, Harold DeFluffy.  
Then he meets a dizzy, dazzling  
Fairy like he'd met in dreamland,  
Thinly clad, and stepping lightly  
As if floating on the breezes—  
Beauty that would knock you cuckoo.  
Says the young brave, "Hello, sister!"  
As he tips his classy headgear;  
But she's wise to all his specie  
For she's met them in their war paint,  
And she knows he is a young buck

From the tribe of Gibbering Haha.  
Unabashed he steps beside her,  
Takes her arm and whispers to her  
That they'll step and hit the high spots.  
But she smiles, and sees approaching  
Kid DuHaney, sparring partner  
Of the mighty K. O. Miggins.  
Then she slyly winks an optic  
On the side to Kid DuHaney.

But to cut short and abridge it,  
We will say that Harold DeFluffy  
Rests within a snowy wigwam,  
Where a squaw in spotless apron  
Bathes his face as per the orders  
Of the man of herbs and ointments.  
Thus we leave our brave on Broadway:  
Harold DeFluffy, born in Kansas,  
Adolescing in the city;  
Convalescing, past the crisis,  
And a weaker, wiser brave.

\* \* \* \*

Mary bought some naptha  
To clean a dress. Alack!  
They're going to bury Mary  
If all her parts come back.

\* \* \* \*

The boy stood on the burning deck;  
The heat was quite intense.  
He could have banked the fire with ease,  
But didn't have the cents (*sense*).

\* \* \* \*

Twinkle, twinkle, movie star,  
How we love your twinkles.  
But please cut out those close-ups, dear,  
It shows too many wrinkles.

If I kill my dog I'm afraid he'll die;  
Our cow has a tail but she don't know why.  
If you want any more you can sing it yourself;  
The shotgun is loaded up there on that shelf.  
I will now sing "I'm On My Way to the Crazy House"  
Accompanied by the orchestra. Rah! Rah! Rah!

\* \* \* \*

## THAT ANTIQUE CRAZE

My wife she got it, too;  
That antique craze, you know.  
Anything that would fall apart  
To her was a piece of ancient art,  
From a seventeen-seventy apple cart  
To a highboy or a so-and-so.

Our bank account went down  
As she nosed about the town.  
Most anything that was covered with dust,  
Corroded, scratched, or laden with rust,  
Was surely something that one could trust—  
Was Paul Revere's or belonged to the Crown.

Now she's under a doctor's care—  
'Twas a Barbara Frietchie chair.  
The one Barb stood on to wave the flag  
That caused that captain's shoulders to sag,  
And made him say "Giddap!" to his nag,  
And her name in history flare.

It had that ancient sheen;  
The padding was old and lean.  
But accidentally I tipped it o'er,  
And on the bottom a stamp it bore:  
"Made in Grand Rapids, by Smith & Moore,  
March, Nineteen Seventeen."



# MUMMIES, RUMMIES AND DUMMIES

## AN AFTERPIECE

PLACE: *In a museum.*

TIME: *Night.*

## CHARACTERS

WADDLES—*Night watchman in the museum.*

SNITCH—*A bold, bad burglar.*

SWIPE—*Another one just like him.*

CROW—*A student of mummyology.*

CACKLE—*Another mummyologist.*

KING TUT—*A mummy.*

PRINCESS PADUCAH—*Also a mummy.*

JULIUS SNEEZER

BRUTUS

MARK ANTHONY

} *Three old cronies of long ago.*

## COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

WADDLES—An elderly darky wearing misfit clothing. Carries a lantern.

SNITCH—About thirty years old. No particular kind of clothes. Wears a cap.

SWIPE—Similar to SNITCH. Carries a bird cage in which is a lighted candle.

CROW—About twenty years old. Wears extreme collegiate clothes.

CACKLE—Similar to CROW.

KING TUT—Dressed in any costume that is ludicrous and outlandish. When in the casket he is wrapped loosely with burlap to represent a mummy.

**PRINCESS PADUCAH**—This part is played by a man. Wears black tights over which is an Hawaiian shredded wheat dancing skirt. She is also wrapped loosely in burlap while in the casket.

**JULIUS SNEEZER** wears a white flowing robe, and has an enormous tin sword hanging from his side.

**BRUTUS**—Similar to **SNEEZER**.

**ANTHONY**—Similar.

**SCENE:** *A room in the museum. Entrances on left and right stage. Small table at center against rear drop on which are two papier-mache skulls, with description cards attached to them. Up right stands a makeshift casket on end. The front is hinged like a door so that it may be swung open. In the casket stands KING TUT. Up left is another casket standing on end. The front of this is not hinged but is standing in such a way that a slight jar will cause it to topple over. In this casket is PRINCESS PADUCAH. Half down right stage is a cupboard facing audience in a diagonal position. This has a door on the front and is large enough to accommodate three standing men. SNEEZER, BRUTUS and ANTHONY occupy this.*

**LIGHTS:** *If stage is equipped with lighting facilities, curtain should rise to dimly lighted stage. Otherwise, lights on full throughout.*

**CURTAIN** rises to unoccupied stage.

(**WADDLES** enters from left with lighted lantern. Crosses and exits right.)

(**SNITCH** tiptoes on from left. Looks around and motions to off left.)

**SNITCH** (in loud whisper). Come on, Swipe!

**SWIPE** (loudly from off stage). Ah's comin'.

**SNITCH** (motions wildly for silence). Sh!!!

**SWIPE** (loudly). Hooooo-ooooooo!!!

**SNITCH**. Shet up, you dog-gone fool!

(SWIPE enters from left carrying a bird cage in which is a lighted candle.)

SWIPE. Golly, it am dark in heah.

SNITCH. Doan make so much noise. Who you yellin' at out dere?

SWIPE. Oh, jes' a p'leeceman, dat's all.

SNITCH. You fool niggah, doan you know us am robbin' dis heah place?

SWIPE. Ah isn't seed nothin' to rob yet. What kind ob a place am dis, nohow? A hotel?

SNITCH. Dog-gone ef Ah knows. Jes' a big buildin', dat's all Ah knows. Oughtah be somethin' in heah to snatch. Sh!!!

SWIPE. Dere you goes soundin' like a goose ag'in.

SNITCH. Sh!!! Somebody am comin'. Put out yoh flush-light.

(SWIPE extinguishes candle and they hide at end of cupboard facing audience.)

(WADDLES enters from right.)

WADDLES (looking around). Shuah did heah somethin' in heah. Dog-gone, ef dis heah job ain't gittin' too spooky foh me. Reckon Ah bettah put on de lights. (Switches lights on full. Then sniffs air.) Mmmmm! Mmmmmm! How odor-furious de ozone am. Done smells like roses.

SWIPE (to audience). Oh, boy, he smells us.

WADDLES. By golly, ef mah ol' woman kin find a job somewhar dis coon ain't gwine keep hangin' 'round dese heah munimies no mo'. (Looks around nervously and exits left.)

SNITCH (as he and SWIPE step towards center). What he say 'bout rummies?

SWIPE. He done say he smelled a coupla dummies. (Looks around.) Dis shuah 'nough am a spooky lookin' place, Snitch.

SNITCH. Niggah, you's allus talkin' 'bout spooks.

SWIPE. What's on dat table? (Walks over to table. Then staggers back.) Oh, lawsy!

SNITCH. What's mattah?

SWIPE (*pointing to skulls*). Bone-heads!

SNITCH. O-O! (*Steps cautiously towards table.*)

SWIPE. Wha—What dat readin' say, Snitch?

SNITCH (*stretches neck to read card*). It done say dat am de skull ob Sapolia Bonypart.

SWIPE. What's de othah skull?

SNITCH. Reckon mebbe dat was his, too, when he was a baby.

(*Grating noise off stage.*)

SWIPE. Ah doan like it in heah. Is you skeered, Snitch?

SNITCH. Ah isn't skeered, Swipe, but 'tain't no place Ah'd pick out foh a campin' ground. What us gwine steal?

SWIPE. Let's steal a way.

SNITCH. How is you gwine steal a weigh? Dey isn't no scales heah.

SWIPE. Ah's full o' scales. Ah feels like a fish out'n water.

SNITCH. Light yoh flashlight.

SWIPE. Howcome? 'Tain't dark in heah.

SNITCH. Dat doan make no nevahmind. You can't be a bu'glar 'less you got a flashlight. Light dat flashlight. (*SWIPE strikes a match and lights candle. A noise is heard off stage.*) Put out dat light! (*SWIPE blows candle out.*) Reckon weren't nothin' aftah all. Light dat flashlight. (*SWIPE strikes another match and lights candle. Loud bumping noise off stage.*) Put out dat light! (*SWIPE blows candle out. They listen but hear nothing.*) Got fooled ag'in. Light dat flashlight.

SWIPE. Wot you thunk Ah is, a traffic signal?

SNITCH. Shet up! Light dat flashlight! (*SWIPE lights candle, and blows it out before SNITCH can say anything.*) Listen! Ah heahs footsteps.

SWIPE. Mebbe it am mices.

SNITCH. Mices doan wear shoes.

SWIPE. How you knows dey don't?

SNITCH. Nothin' wears shoes 'cept people.

SWIPE. How 'bout horses?

SNITCH. Sh! Us gotta hide.

SWIPE. So hab a bear.

SNITCH. What you talkin' 'bout?

SWIPE. Didn't you evah see a bear hide?

SNITCH. Heah comes somebody.

SWIPE (*starts off left*). An' heah goes somebody.

SNITCH (*grabs him*). Come heah. (*Drags him behind end of cupboard at right.*) Now stan' still.

SWIPE. Evahthing am still 'cept mah knees. An', mah, mah, how dey is vibratin'!

SNITCH. Sh!

SWIPE. Ah—

SNITCH. Shhhhhhhh!

SWIPE. Boy, you's leakin' air.

SNITCH (*sharply*). Shet up!

SWIPE. Ah's shet. (*They stand like statues.*)

(CROW and CACKLE *tiptoe on from right.*)

CROW. This am the room, Cackle.

CACKLE. Am it?

CROW. It am. Boy, won't dem other students be s'prised when we marches into class with a mummy?

CACKLE. Uh-huh. An' dey is going to be s'prised, too, if we marches into jail. We better nose around fust an' see what's here. (*Goes up right.*) Now if I understands kee-rectly, this am de mummy o' King Tut.

CROW (*points to up left*). An' am dat de Princess?

CACKLE. Uh-huh. Dat am s'posed to be Princess Paducah whom was de second daughter by de fust wife of her third husband who was de Queen o' Kalamazink on her Uncle Rhubarb's side.

CROW. Boy, dere family tree must o' looked like a grapevine.

CACKLE. I reckons dat am all de mummies.

SWIPE (*aside to SNITCH*). Now come de dummies.

SNITCH. Sh!

CROW. What was dat?

CACKLE. Sound like a steam pipe.

CROW. Mebbe 'twas a cat.

SWIPE (*imitates cat*). Meeee-ow!

CACKLE. Yep. A cat.

SNITCH (*aside to SWIPE*). Good thing he didn't said lion.

CROW (*suddenly sees SNITCH and SWIPE standing stiffly at end of cupboard*). Cackle!

CACKLE. Huh?

CROW. Am dem more mummies over dere?

CACKLE (*looks towards cupboard*). Boy, if dey is mummies dey's shuah 'nough sunburnt.

CROW. Let's 'zamine dem. Maybe dey's mummies from de dark ages.

CACKLE. P'raps dey's knights o' old. Dem knights was pow'ful dark.

CROW. Howcome? Didn't dey hab no moonshine den?

CACKLE. No. Dat were 'bout de time dey had Shakesbeer. (*They go to SNITCH and SWIPE who are standing very still and stiff.*) Dey looks almost human, doan dey?

CROW. Uh-huh. But you kin tell by the shape of de heads dat dey isn't far removed from de monkeys.

CACKLE. Is dey mummyfied?

CROW. Reckon so. (*He pinches SNITCH on arm. SNITCH winces.*) Kind o' soft.

CACKLE. How 'bout de heads? De heads am what counts mostest.

CROW (*feels of SNITCH's head*). Mmmm! Mmmmm! Dat part's petrified.

CACKLE (*points finger at SWIPE*). Crow, did you ever see such a homely mug as dat?

(*SWIPE makes a wry face.*)

CROW. Didn't dat face move?

CACKLE. 'Magination, boy. Jest 'magination.

CROW. I'se tellin' you dat mummy's face done moved.

CACKLE. Maybe dey dug up dat mummy out in Hollywood, an' he's got a movie face.

(*Heavy footsteps heard off stage.*)

CROW. What's dat?

CACKLE. Let's hide. (*The sound of footsteps grows fainter and fainter.*) Done gone de other way. (*They are now facing left. SWIPE kicks CACKLE in seat of trousers and quickly reassumes pose. CACKLE whirls around. Then turns on CROW.*) What foh you kick me?

CROW. Boy, I didn't kick nothin' a-tall.

CACKLE (*a bit angry*). Jest same, don't do it ag'in.

(*They listen and look to off left. SNITCH kicks CROW.*)

CROW. Look heah, Cackle. If you wants to kick somethin' buy a football.

CACKLE. What you talkin' 'bout?

CROW. I'se talkin' 'bout you kickin' me.

CACKLE. You's crazy. I didn't kick you.

CROW. You did, too.



CACKLE. I didn't.

SNITCH. You's a liar!

CACKLE and CROW (*thinks the other one spoke and both talk at once*). Who's a liar?—Don't you go callin' me no liar.—I did not!—

(*Slight noise off left attracts their attention and they stand tense. Simultaneously SWIPE kicks one of them and SNITCH kicks the other.*)

CACKLE and CROW (*both talk at once excitedly*). Dog-gone!—I'se gettin' mad!—I don't 'low nobody to kick me!—A joke am a joke—

(*Loud noise off left causes them to become silent at once. They quickly hide behind SNITCH and SWIPE.*)

(WADDLES enters with lantern in one hand and a shotgun in other. Stops and looks around.)

WADDLES. Dog-gone rats! De nex' thing Ah sees movin' 'round heah Ah's gwine shoot. Nevah did like rats nohow. (*Exits right*).

(SNITCH and SWIPE tiptoe towards center.)

(CACKLE and CROW are very much frightened to see what they thought to be mummies walk away.)

CROW. Eeeeeek!

CACKLE. Help!

(SWIPE and SNITCH whirl about. This frightens the two students more. They try to run behind cupboard, but bump against it so hard the cupboard door flies open. Standing like statues in the cupboard are JULIUS SNEEZER, MARK ANTHONY and BRUTUS. SWIPE and SNITCH embrace each other and shake with terror. CACKLE and CROW peer wild-eyed from behind cupboard. Gun discharged off right. CACKLE and CROW leap from behind cupboard, but when they see the men in cupboard they stand as if frozen to the spot. Like robots the men in cupboard step forth. The four frightened darkies are too scared to move. The three men from the

*cupboard ignore SWIPE, SNITCH, CROW and CACKLE as if they did not see them.)*

BRUTUS (*stretches himself*). What ho, Brother Sneezer! 'Tis well to be free once more.

ANTHONY (*oratorically*). Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears. I will return them tomorrow. I come to bury Sneezer—

SNEEZER. O-ho, and a bottle of rum! But the great and glorious Sneezer yet lives. (*Steps right suddenly and speaks dramatically as the frightened darkies dodge back.*) He lives! He lives! He lives for Rome, and the Roman knows—

BRUTUS. Then dost the pug live for the pug nose.

SNEEZER (*draws sword and waves it threateningly*). Methinks 'tis time I shall hamburger your tonsils, great and brave Brutus.

ANTHONY. Hold!

SNEEZER. Hold what, wonderful Anthony?

ANTHONY. Hold everything!

SNEEZER. It cannot be as you say, O Anthony. 'Tis me-self that is raring to go. (*Swings sword wildly and all retreat. The darkies are nearly paralyzed with fright.*)

BRUTUS (*draws sword*). On your guard, O luscious Sneezer, for the good of Rome.

(BRUTUS makes a wild sweep at SNEEZER with sword. They dance about stage while the darkies dodge about endeavoring to keep out of their way. After some time of comedy dueling BRUTUS bumps against PADUCAH's casket. The lid is thrown aside. PADUCAH steps forth and all stand in amazement. She shakes the burlap from around her and does a comedy Hawaiian dance around stage. She dances to the darkies in turn and gives them a hug. They are both frightened and pleased.)

BRUTUS (*to PADUCAH*). Stop, sweet and delectable sugar!

PADUCAH (*stops dancing and giggles*). He-he! I feel so silly! (*Giggles.*)

BRUTUS. I say now, in the name of Nero's fiddle, who art thou?

PADUCAH. Oh, sir, please excuse my blush, but I am the forty-fourth wife of King Solomon, the greatest king that ever lived!

(*The door of KING TUT's casket is thrown open. TUT steps out, shakes the burlap from around him and stands dramatically pointing finger at PADUCAH.*)

TUT. Who sayeth that somebody besides me hath been the greatest king? I am King Tut.

SWIPE. Tut-tut!

TUT (*angrily steps down and all cower*). Who tut-tutted? (*No answer.*) From the tombs of Egypt I come, where the bones of great men rattle—

SNITCH. Who said bones? (*Pulls a large size set of dice from pocket and throws on floor.*) Come seben!

(SWIPE, forgetting to be afraid, drops to his knees interested in dice. CROW and CACKLE do likewise.)

TUT (*claps hands with glee*). A-ha! The great game of the pyramids! (*Drops to his knees, picks up dice and rolls them.*) Come on! Baby needs a new pair of shoes!

ANTHONY. So be it. As our great Shakespeare hath said, " 'Tis the snake's hips." (*Drops on knees with others.*)

BRUTUS. Oh, Brother Sneezer, shall we shake a leg or shake the cubes?

SNEEZER. Pray let us shake hands and be friends, and get in the game. (*They shake hands and drop to knees.*)

(PADUCAH dances about and into their midst, very much disrupting their game.)

(*Gun discharged off right. Those on stage are frightened. A large imitation rat is pulled quickly across stage by thread. WADDLES runs on from right with shotgun. He is very much*

*confused and frightened when he sees those on stage dashing about trying to escape. PADUCAH runs into her casket. TUT sets up door to her casket and then dashes into his own, closing the door. ANTHONY, BRUTUS and SNEEZER leap into their cupboard and slam door. The darkies do not know where to go. All lights suddenly go out, leaving stage in total darkness.)*

*(Lights come on. All is serene. No one is on stage except WADDELES who is sitting in an easy chair sound asleep. He rouses and stretches. Then yawns and looks around.)*

WADDLES. Mmmmm! Mmmmmmm! What a dream! What a dream!

QUICK CURTAIN.

## AT THE DOCK

SCENE: *On the pier that leads to the boat landing.*

TIME. *On a moonlight evening.*

### CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR PUFFBALL: *Musical Director.*

PLUNK: *The banjoist.*

INDIGO: *The blues singer.*

COKE	}	<i>The Howling Harmony Quartette.</i>
JOKE		
SMOKE		
POKE		
TOTE	}	<i>Prop boys.</i>
LUG		

*(All Blackface)*

The scene is supposed to be on the pier that leads to the boat or ferry landing. At rise of curtain the stage is rather dimly lighted to represent a moonlight evening. Later a pier

light, which is supposed to be off-stage, is lighted, thus lighting up the stage proper. The stage is plainly set. A few packing boxes at random and perhaps a salt barrel or two will suffice.

*(Before curtain rises, QUARTETTE is heard singing in distance accompanied by banjoist. The singing becomes louder as the singers come nearer and nearer. Curtain rises and the entire cast strolls on from right near end of number. TOTE and LUG are weighted down with baggage.)*

PUFFBALL *(looks off left)*. Well, boys, it done look like de boat isn't arrived yet.

COKE. What time am it?

PUFFBALL *(looks at watch)*. Past-half eight. Us isn't gwine git down to Chestah in time foh dat jamboree 'less dat boat arroves purty sudden-like.

INDIGO. Dey shuah 'nough wouldn't hab much ob a shew 'less us was dere to help dem out.

TOTE. Ef you-all sings like you done did at de last place dey's gwine help *you'ns* out.

PUFFBALL. Listen heah, Tote, you isn't got no talk in dis business. You an' Lug am tookin' care ob de props an' dat am all.

LUG. Us got 'nough props heah foh a circus.

TOTE. 'Tain't no circus luggin' dem around.

PLUNK. Howcome dey isn't lights on dis dock?

PUFFBALL. Jest wondahin' de same thing. *(Yells to off left.)* Hey! Howcome no lights? *(Lights immediately come on.)* Reckon Ah isn't influence 'round heah, huh? Boys, you shuah 'nough got de right man to lead dis heah bunch.

POKE. Den lead us to some ham an' eggs.

PUFFBALL. Dat shows whar you is igerant about singin' Nevah sing on a full stomach.

POKE. An' nevah eat on a empty stomach.

JOKE. What us gwine sing mostes' when us gits dere?

PUFFBALL. Ah done got de program heah. (*Fishes paper from pocket.*) Us am gwine open de show wif—

TOTE. —a key.

PUFFBALL. Co'se us am gwine open de show wif a key. De key ob G.

LUG. Ah bets it'll sound like L.

PUFFBALL. Look heah, you dog-gone luggage luggahs, Ah craves dat you done keep shet. Us am gwine open de show wif—

LUG. —a crowbar. (*He dodges when PUFFBALL makes a pass at him.*)

PUFFBALL. Us am gwine open de show wif “—— —.” (*Name song selected.*)

SMOKE. Mmmmm! Mmmmm! Us isn't sung dat song foh a long time.

PUFFBALL. Den us bettah try it out. (*They sing announced song after finding places to sit on the various boxes and barrels.*) Not so bad, not so bad.

TOTE. Not so good. Not so good. (*He leaps back, dodging the kick aimed by PUFFBALL.*)

JOKE. 'Bout fo' yeahs Ah done drap mah dollah watch in dis heah rivah right off'n dis pier.

PLUNK. Am dat a fac'?

JOKE. Uh-huh. An' two yeahs latah Ah done dive down an' git dat watch.

INDIGO. O-O!

JOKE. An' it were still runnin'. (*He is greeted with murmurs of doubt.*)

PUFFBALL. Is you tryin' to tell dis bunch dat you done drap yoh watch in dis heah rivah an' it were in dere foh two yeahs?

JOKE. Perzactly.

PUFFBALL. An' dat when you done got it out'n dis rivah it were still runnin'?

JOKE. Perzactly.

PUFFBALL. Man, dey isn't no watch made dat 'ud run dat long.

JOKE. Ah means de rivah was still runnin'. (*Laughs heartily.*)

PLUNK. Dis am de 'zact spot whar somethin' 'most happen to me.

PUFFBALL. Splanify, Plunk.

PLUNK. You done knows 'bout all de trouble Ah hab wif mah fust wife?

COKE. Evahbody in town knowed 'bout dat.

PLUNK. Well, sah, one night Ah gits plumb tired ob it all, an' comes down heah to drown mah troubles.

COKE. Howcome you didn't do it?

PLUNK. She was too dog-gone big to push in. (*All laugh.*)

PUFFBALL. What she done do?

PLUNK. She pushed me in.

PUFFBALL. Pushed you in de rivah?

PLUNK. No; in de face. (*All laugh.*) Didja heah dis one yet? (*Plunks on banjo.*)

SMOKE. Whoop 'em up, boys! Whoop 'em up!

(*PLUNK plays a very lively piece while others clap hands to time. If there is a good dancer in the crowd let him have the floor.*)

POKE (*after number is finished*). Dat reminds me ob de time Ah was in Egypt.

PUFFBALL. Boy, you doan even know what state Egypt am in.

POKE. Am dat so?

PUFFBALL. Jest what state am Egypt in?

POKE. In a state ob excitement most de time.

INDIGO. Did you done see de pyramids?



POKE. Huh?

INDIGO. Ah done ax you if you seed de pyramids.

POKE. Oh, shuah 'nough. Ah seed evahthing dey was to see.

PUFFBALL. An' you done seed de ruins?

POKE. Dat's what Ah means. Jes' soon's Ah got dere Ah stahted to peer-amid de ruins. (*All laugh.*)

PUFFBALL (*sarcastically*). Boy, you shuah knows a heap 'bout Egypt.

SMOKE. Poke shuah knows 'bout Egypt. Yes, sah, he shuah does. Ah done lend him fo' bits an' nevah got it back.

PUFFBALL. What dat got to do wif Egypt?

SMOKE. 'e-gypped me! 'e-gypped me! (*All laugh.*)

PUFFBALL (*looks off left*). Kain't figgah out howcome de boat doan come.

TOTE. Mebbe it done got a flat tire.

PUFFBALL (*strikes at him but misses*). Boy, you's gwine hab a blow-out ef you doan button up. While us am waitin' us might as well tune up on somethin' else.

PLUNK. How 'bout lettin' Indigo do his stuff?

PUFFBALL. You said somethin', Plunk. Indigo, loosen yoh tonsils.

(INDIGO *steps down and accompanied by PLUNK or orchestra sings a popular blues song.*)

(*Immediately following song a boat whistle is heard far away.*)

ALL (*ad lib*). Heah she comes! (*and other suitable exclamations.*)

PUFFBALL. Jest time foh one mo' song. Now altogethah!

(*They step down stage and sing "Robert E. Lee" or other appropriate closing song. Near end of song they step back of curtain line. Curtain comes down as boat whistle sounds near at hand.*)

















